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## Library Community Engagement In Omaha (Ne): A New Core-Function And Leadership Role To Address 21st Century Challenges

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**LIBRARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN OMAHA (NE) :  
A NEW CORE-FUNCTION AND LEADERSHIP ROLE  
TO ADDRESS 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES**

**Final Report  
7/31/15**

**A Grant Program Evaluation**

**Prepared for the Omaha Public Library and the  
Institute for Museum and Library Services**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for the Omaha (Nebraska) Public Library (OPL) with primary funding through a grant provided by the Institute for Museum and Library Services [IMLS]. OPL subsequently contracted with the Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR), College of Public Affairs and Community Services, University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) to provide evaluation training for project staff and to conduct the program evaluation study.

The major OPL and IMLS goals and objectives in funding and undertaking this initiative are:

1. To explore and examine the dimensions and components of community-engagement (CE) as a new, core-library function and service-provision strategy in the 21st century.
2. To create and strengthen CE and facilitation capacities among staff and organizational partners.
3. To develop a collaborative-culture model of CE activities and practice tools that will be useful for all libraries and community/organizational personnel.

This evaluation study and report present an overview of the OPL community-engagement initiative, the major research findings and program recommendations. We hope that this information will be valuable for professional library practitioners and staff, especially those who may be interested in replicating or pursuing similar initiatives elsewhere. More broadly, the information and analyses provided are likewise intended to be useful to public policy-makers and stakeholders, individual citizens, community-groups, future researchers and anyone interested in the issues of better access, dissemination and use of all forms of information in the future.

### A. The OPL Community Engagement Context and Strategic Imperatives

There is nearly-universal agreement among social commentators and professionals in all fields, that human civilization has entered and we are living in a new era of increasingly-rapid and unprecedented technological and global transformations. Arising from and as a result of these changes, all citizens and communities in the United States and worldwide are faced with a constant barrage of emerging and continuing social, political, economic and environmental crises and challenges.

In response to these circumstances locally and to fulfill its overall mission, the OPL Strategic Plan (2011) identified two strategic imperatives to transform and re-position the library, better serve Omaha citizens and build a healthier and more-vibrant community. First, the library chose to adopt a community "NEXUS" role to more-effectively connect citizens, public, private and nonprofit

organizations with each other, in order to create an improved and robust **collaborative-culture** in Omaha.

Second, OPL determined that it needed to develop and implement a **"LONG-REACH"** strategy to better understand and respond to citizen needs and desires, by **improving, extending and expanding services to more people and organizations** in its service area. A major component of this plan being the provision of **innovative skills and capacities** that employ **new approaches to and methods of community-based interactions**, that are in addition to traditional, patron-based library-material and program services.

Similarly, the OPL planning process revealed that to reach these goals in Omaha, new and existing services need to be designed and focused-more toward **under-served, non-traditional and demographically-diverse populations** of users and their specific needs. Equally important is the realization (by library leadership and the entire staff) that a fundamental **re-orientation** has to occur **within** the library, as well as **between** the library, staff and the community. This is especially true in the current **high-technology** era, where rapidly-increasing proportions of **all information and social communication** are available and conducted **digitally on-line** and/or **by phone**.

## **B. Purposes of the Study**

This report presents the findings of our comprehensive evaluation of the Omaha Public Library's, **Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement** initiative. Important findings from previous research conducted in the fields of CE, service learning, library science, urban culture and other disciplines shaped the research design and methodologies of this demonstration project. They also provide a sturdy platform on which future CE initiatives and evaluations, in the Omaha metropolitan-area and by other libraries everywhere, can build.

The primary purposes and corresponding components of the study are three-fold. **First**, the **process study** describes the historical and local CE context, the major project goals and objectives, program implementation and products. It also documents project barriers, obstacles and problems that were encountered, the actions by library leadership and staff that were taken to address them, and finally, provides lessons learned and other recommendations to inform future efforts.

**Second**, the **outcome study** examines quantitative measures, indicators and methodologies used in gathering relevant, baseline information on local living conditions and community perceptions from local citizens, library patrons and program participants. This study also examines and reports the findings of 19 pilot project evaluations. These were conducted by teams of trained library facilitators, who designed, organized and conducted a series of three, increasingly complex CE demonstration projects.

Finally, this study provides an overview of the major accomplishments and products of the initiative, based on an integration of both the process and outcome findings. It also includes further discussion and recommendations for replication and/or modification of program components or of the model in toto, in ensuing library-based CE projects.

### C. Organization of the Report

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Chapter II reports the findings of the process study of the Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement demonstration project in Omaha, as described in the original grant proposal submitted to and awarded by the IMLS. This includes detailed, qualitative descriptions of major program goals and objectives, local community conditions, the cultural context and the implementation of all aforementioned and relevant aspects of the grant project. It also presents implementation-assessment findings for the 19 pilot CE projects, which are based on external-evaluator analyses of whether and how-well, they furthered OPL's strategic core goals and addressed issue-oriented objectives.

Chapter III reports the findings of the outcome study of the project, examining the quantitative data collected through written and online surveys, which establish baseline measurements of living conditions and citizen perceptions of the community. It also presents discussion of how the community-survey instruments, which were also adapted for use in the evaluation of the pilot projects, can and should be further refined and developed for use in identifying and evaluating important new and longer-term CE projects in the future.

To conclude the report, Chapter IV presents a broader view of the key observations and learning that occurred during (and as a result of) completing the initiative, based on an integration of both the process and outcome study findings. Beyond the results presented in the prior two chapters, these analyses focus on the important developments and discoveries, lessons learned and significant patterns and insights that emerged (some quite unexpectedly!) during the 2-year project. From these, the project evaluators present a list of the most critical components and aspects of the CE model studied, that should be included and more-fully developed for optimal results and success, in continuing OPL efforts and by other libraries planning, pursuing or improving their own initiatives.

## II. PROCESS STUDY OF GRANT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

In this chapter, we report the findings from our process study of the Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement library-demonstration project. The purpose of the process study is to document the overall context and key components of the CE initiative, the implementation of all phases of the project, the accomplishments and progress achieved and areas for further development and future improvement.

To this end, we conducted interviews and attended project meetings, trainings and pilot project presentations, in some instances as participant observers. We also conducted a comprehensive literature, document and project-website review and provided data collection and evaluation training for CE project team leaders and staff facilitators.

### A. Overview of Library Community Engagement, Project Goals and Objectives

We begin with a discussion of the local context of the Omaha library and the major goals and objectives of the OPL CE grant project funded by IMLS. The major aims of this CE initiative closely align with, and are indeed guided by, the mission statement and the most-critical strategic goals and objectives described in the recently-adopted OPL Strategic Plan (2011).<sup>1</sup>

The plan calls for the introduction and long-term implementation of CE as a new core-function of the Omaha library system. A review of the most-recent and important library civic-engagement literature and research, shows that highly-engaged and empowered citizens and organizations, that interact and work together in a collaborative culture, produce the best results on a variety of societal fronts (Lober, 1997; Takahashi & Smutny, 2002; McNamara, 2007; National League of Cities, 2010; Urban Libraries Council, 2011).

First, such communities typically generate sound, democratically-based public-policy decisions and solutions to social and economic challenges, while also improving the overall well-being of their

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<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Plan 2011 of the Omaha Public Library involved an extensive information gathering process of community and staff surveys and forums, structured personal interviews, focus groups, environmental scanning and strategy workshops that involved over 1,000 Omaha residents. The participants included library patrons, interested and key citizens, community leaders and stakeholders, representing all civic sectors and socio-economic and geographic areas of the city and the library's service area.

The consulting firm Ideation Collaborative and their principal strategist, Sam McBane Mulford, assisted OPL in developing the plan. She, along with Cheryl Gould of the firm Fully Engaged Libraries, also assisted OPL with the development of the IMLS community-engagement grant proposal and were both consultants and facilitation trainers for this project.

citizens (Block, 2005; Golding, 2009; National Conference on Citizenship, 2009 and 2010; Alliance for Innovation, 2010). Additionally, numerous civic engagement studies point to **libraries as uniquely positioned and qualified to be the ideal anchor institutions** to assume the **central CE leadership role** today (Putnam, 2005; Urban Libraries Council, 2005; Galston, Huber, Borman, 2013; Garner, 2014).

This assertion is based on the facts that libraries have historically been and are still viewed, by the vast majority of citizens, as safe, trusted, universally welcoming, unbiased, apolitical, information and resource-laden places, located in the very hearts of their neighborhoods and communities.

### ***Major Strategic Goals of Omaha's CE Initiative***

As mentioned in the introduction, two major **core goals** or strategic imperatives (**NEXUS AND LONG-REACH**) emerged during OPL strategic planning, which essentially describe the **operational or working definition** of library CE in this project and in Omaha. They provide the conceptual rationale for and **a model** of the functional activities necessary, that will transform the mindset of and services provided by the library. The goals are to be attained by incorporating, facilitating and realizing CE as a critical component of the library's overall mission and operation.

The **NEXUS** strategy calls for the library to become **the means** and (often) **the place**, for every citizen and organizations from all sectors of the community, to be able to come together, connect and collaborate, in determining and then addressing, the community's most pressing issues, needs and desires. In so doing, the library will be assuming the **leadership role** in the creation and ongoing improvement of a **collaborative culture** in Omaha.

The **LONG-REACH** strategy is designed to **improve, extend, and expand opportunities and services** to ever-growing numbers of **citizens and organizations**,<sup>2</sup> so that the library and the broader community can better understand and respond to, their aspirations, perceptions, concerns, needs and interests. Practical activities and expected outcomes of implementing the NEXUS and LONG-REACH strategies, include the library facilitating the development of widely-shared **community discussions** and **visions**, establishing **priorities**, a **comprehensive agenda** and robust **collaborative actions**, to adequately address the most-critical **quality of life** and **equity issues** in Omaha.

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<sup>2</sup> According to OPL, its service area contains approximately 500,000 people, with about 50% having a library card. The library is committed to reaching and interacting with the remaining 250,000 who currently do not have a card, possession of which the library sees as being the key to opening their worlds.



## **Key Issue-Oriented Focus Areas and Objectives**

In addition to the major strategic goals and components described above, four key, **issue-oriented focus areas** were also identified during the OPL planning process, as being most critical to the library fulfilling its leadership role and best serving the public and community. These **focus areas** and **objectives**, which address local conditions and the most important socio-economic issues, needs and problems in Omaha, as identified in the OPL strategic plan, are as follows:

1. Addressing the deep and widening **socio-economic divide** among Omaha's citizens and between different geographic areas, along with related **social problems** for the disadvantaged and minority groups. Such problems include high rates of poverty, unemployment, crime and violence, educational access and achievement gaps and wealth and income disparities, etc.
2. Improving and expanding **inclusiveness**, (regardless of race/ethnic origins, gender, sexual orientation or other factors that result in exclusion of minorities, etc.), **opportunity pathways** (for example, adequate training, mentoring, roles, employment positions, etc.) and **community leadership** for **all persons** in the private, public and nonprofit sectors.
3. Bolstering economic **growth and prosperity**, improving the **distribution** of needed services, high-quality goods and modern infrastructure (both physical and non-physical)<sup>3</sup> for **all persons** in **all areas** of the city.
4. Expanding social, economic, political and **civic-participation and collaboration** opportunities and activities for all citizens, regardless of geographic location, income or wealth, class status or other impediments.

The vast amount of community information and citizen input collected and assembled in the preparation of the OPL strategic plan (2011), also demonstrated that the historical model of simply and primarily serving only those patrons who **come to the library**, would no longer suffice to meet the current needs and challenges of Omaha. Community and library leaders and stakeholders therefore, decided that what was called for is the addition and integration of a **new model** of library CE. A simple, yet fundamental, principal that differentiates CE from previous and other library outreach and programs, is **specially-trained staff going out into neighborhoods and the community** to continually and purposefully engage citizens and organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> Physical infrastructure includes the built places, facilities, roads and utilities that commonly come to mind, while non-physical infrastructure includes such things as digital information networks, data management systems, skilled and knowledgeable workers and professional, competent institutional and cultural organizations, etc.

The comprehensive review and a comparison of the most-recent and important library civic-engagement literature, supports our view that the OPL CE plan or model (as described in the library's strategic plan and the more detailed proposal for this project, see Appendix A), incorporates and mirrors the essential elements of library CE as it is most-often envisioned and understood, in the library and civic-engagement professional fields and academic disciplines. We will now examine and describe the implementation of CE initiative, which will also provide a more-complete description and understanding of the Omaha model, its operation and the results that were produced during the two-year project period.

## **B. Implementation of the OPL Community Engagement Initiative**

The OPL CE initiative had several advantages at the outset, that other libraries might not initially have, which likely impacted the implementation of the project. First, as noted earlier in the introduction and this chapter, a detailed plan for CE, as a new core function of the library, had been incorporated as an integral part of the OPL Strategic Plan (2011).

Second, the new CE function and strategy had the full-backing and proactive support of the OPL Executive Director<sup>4</sup> and Library Board of Trustees. Finally (as also noted earlier), the very-experienced library and community-facilitation consultants, who assisted OPL with the development of the strategic plan (see footnote 1), were also highly involved in writing the detailed grant proposal, implementing the program and providing essential services (such as training library staff in community-meeting facilitation in the pilot projects) for the Omaha CE initiative.

### **Key Project Components and Activities**

Given these circumstances, the project proposal itself essentially laid out and comprised an ideal scenario and a detailed plan for OPL's development and operationalization of its existing CE strategy. The main components and activities of the initiative (as laid out in the narrative of the grant proposal) include:

1. The selection and empowerment of a Core Team of CE leadership and management, comprised of six senior library staff (with system-wide experience and authority in such areas as community outreach and services, strategic and business intelligence, programs and events, staff development and metrics, volunteers and community partners and marketing and

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<sup>4</sup> OPL Executive Director Gary Wasdin assumed a new position as ED of the Seattle (Washington) Public Library System just at the completion of this project. As of the release of this report, OPL is now operating under the direction of its second Interim Director since that time, while the current search for a new permanent ED is in progress.

media), two expert consultants in library strategy, facilitation and training and two senior applied-research and program evaluation consultants from a local university.<sup>5</sup>

The OPL senior staff on the Core Team are responsible for overall project coordination and management, logistics, communication, oversight, accountability and reporting to the OPL Executive Director and the funding agency.

2. The development of a plan for a comprehensive (process and outcome) evaluation of the entire project, a program logic model, a baseline community survey and a methodology for the self-evaluation of CE pilot projects.
3. A process of mapping and utilizing community assets, relationships and networks.
4. A series of trainings and workshops throughout the project period for library leadership, staff and community participants on: asset mapping, relationship building, communication, progressively-sophisticated community-meeting facilitation, evaluation design and outcome measurement.
5. A process for the selection of 16 library staff to comprise a Facilitators in Training (FIT) team.
6. The development of three tiers or levels of increasingly-difficult and complex CE pilot projects to be carried out and self-evaluated by two to three-person FIT teams.

### ***Project Planning, Organization and Timeline***

As reflected in Figure 1, a detailed plan for the implementation of the key CE initiative activities, tasks and components was developed, including a timeline and schedule for the initiation and completion of each, as part of the IMLS grant proposal. This task summary and timeline document itself, proved to be a valuable tool for project leaders, to help library staff and program participants better understand the OPL CE initiative in its entirety, as well as in how the various components and stages of this highly-complex and long-term project logically fit together.

To allow members of the FIT team sufficient time to process lessons learned from the first two pilot projects and incorporate necessary changes in ensuing pilot proposals and projects, the timeline was amended (during the project) to add appropriate time in the schedule.

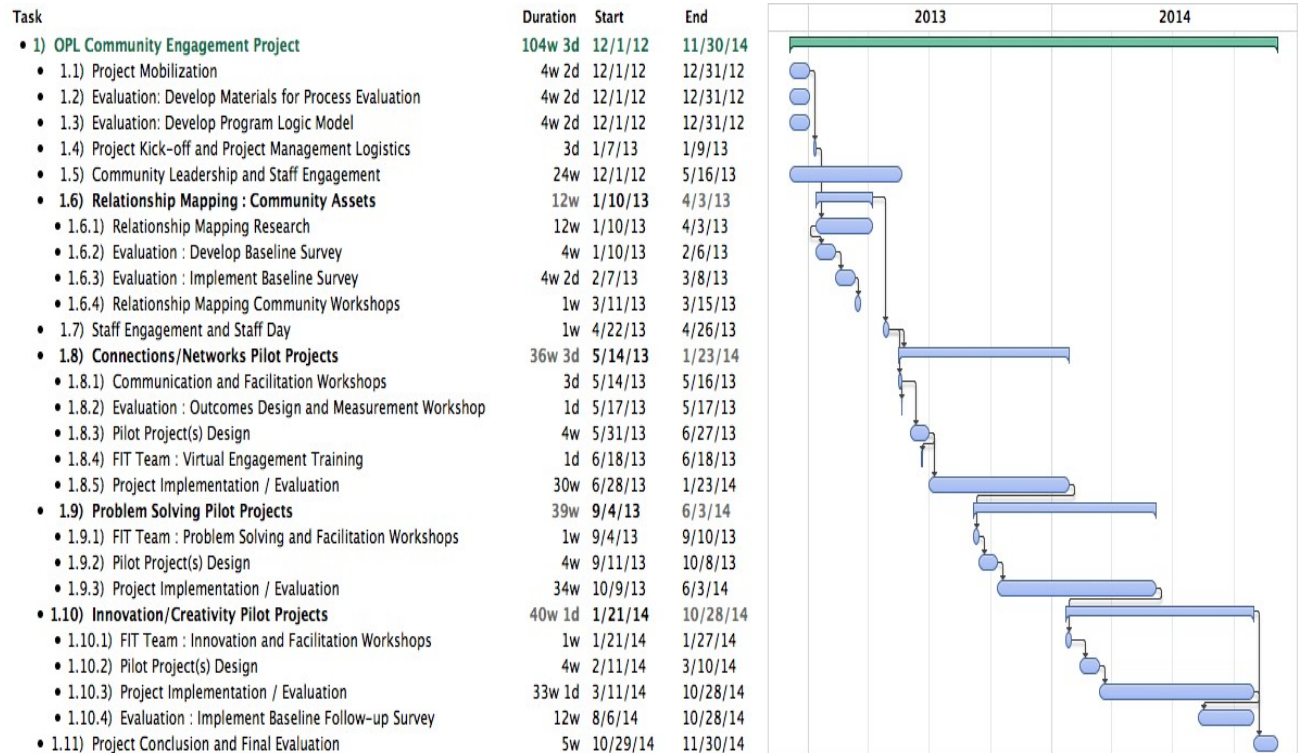
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<sup>5</sup> University of Nebraska at Omaha, College of Public Affairs and Community Services, Center for Public Affairs Research.

# Figure 1 Schedule of Completion

## Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement

The project will begin December 1, 2012 and conclude 24 months later on November 30, 2014. All major project activities and milestones, with intended start and end dates, are represented in the Gantt chart below. Each activity is described in the Project Design section of the proposal narrative.



## C. Process Study Findings and Project Products

In this section we report the findings and results of our process study of the OPL CE initiative. We begin with our observations and analyses of whether the project was **implemented as envisioned and planned**, whether any **major barriers or obstacles** were encountered and **what was done to overcome them**.

As part of this implementation evaluation, we provide an assessment of how-well this CE model furthered OPL's major strategic goals and addressed issue-focused objectives. This includes the development and testing of **qualitative CE scoring and ranking methodologies**, which might be **used or adapted** in future activities in Omaha or by other libraries as part of their CE initiatives. Similarly, throughout this section we **provide examples of project products** (such as training

materials, pilot-project design and evaluation forms, and community asset maps, etc.) that are elements of this library-CE model.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Observations and Assessments of Project Implementation***

In our roles as participant-observer program evaluators, the authors of this report strongly agree that overall, this CE demonstration project was implemented as initially envisioned and planned, encountered few, if any, major or significant barriers or obstacles, while minor issues were swiftly and effectively dealt with and overcome by the Core Team and library project consultants.

In addition, we strongly concur that the community-meeting facilitation trainings (which we observed and participated in) in preparation for the pilot projects, were highly-detailed, comprehensive, and very hands-on experiential for the active learning and practice of the trainees.

The following is a listing of the key components of the implementation of the project (additional important elements are also presented in Chapter IV), with descriptive summaries and examples of related materials and documents as appropriate:

**Core Team Coordination, Management and Reporting.** As detailed above, the creation of a project Core Team comprised of sufficient numbers of highly-experienced and empowered senior library staff, and also including expert library and evaluation consultants, was perhaps the most-fundamental component contributing to the successful implementation of this project.

With the equally-important, proactive and strong backing of the OPL Executive Director, the Core Team was able to immediately organize and define leadership roles and responsibilities for all participants, coordinate scheduling, logistics and communications, procure and/or shift resources, evaluate CE potentials for each branch and implement consensual processes and preferences for project activities, among participating library personnel and consultants.

**Project Mobilization and Kick-Off Training.** In addition to explaining and discussing the detailed project activities and roles described above, during the initial mobilization and introductory project kick-off training sessions, Core Team members and library consultants also devoted significant time and attention to presenting the vision, philosophy, history and social context of library CE, as the new, integral component of OPL's strategic plan to provide vital community services to meet 21st century challenges. Later training sessions also included presentations on shared-information networks, documentation, communication and management tools (see Chapter IV for additional

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<sup>6</sup> Project library-consultants Sam McBane Mulford and Cheryl Gould are preparing a comprehensive CE training, facilitation and resources toolkit, which is also a final product of this grant.

information and assessment of the virtual and information-technology [IT] component of the project).

**Asset and Relationship Mapping Community Workshops.** The first direct CE interactions with citizens and organizations in the community, occurred during initial asset and relationship mapping workshops, which were held about three months after project mobilization. Two community meetings on back-to-back days, involved presentations, discussions and working sessions with invited citizens, stakeholders and organizations (see Appendix B.1).

These provided library staff with important information about community perceptions and needs, as well as an initial knowledgebase of community organizations and resources, for potential use in designing and organizing the pilot CE projects. The meeting summary documents in Appendix B.1, also show those stakeholders and organizations that ultimately participated in the pilot projects (highlighted in yellow).

**Pilot-Project Facilitation Trainings.** Early in our participation and observations of the CE initiative, it became readily apparent that the training of library staff, particularly the FIT team (members of which assumed the primary responsibility for library engagement with the community via the pilot projects), was of primary importance on several levels. First, in order to be successful, FIT team actors needed to have a clear and comprehensive understanding of all philosophical, strategic and programmatic aspects of the library's commitment to and operationalization (real world launching) of CE as a new core-function.

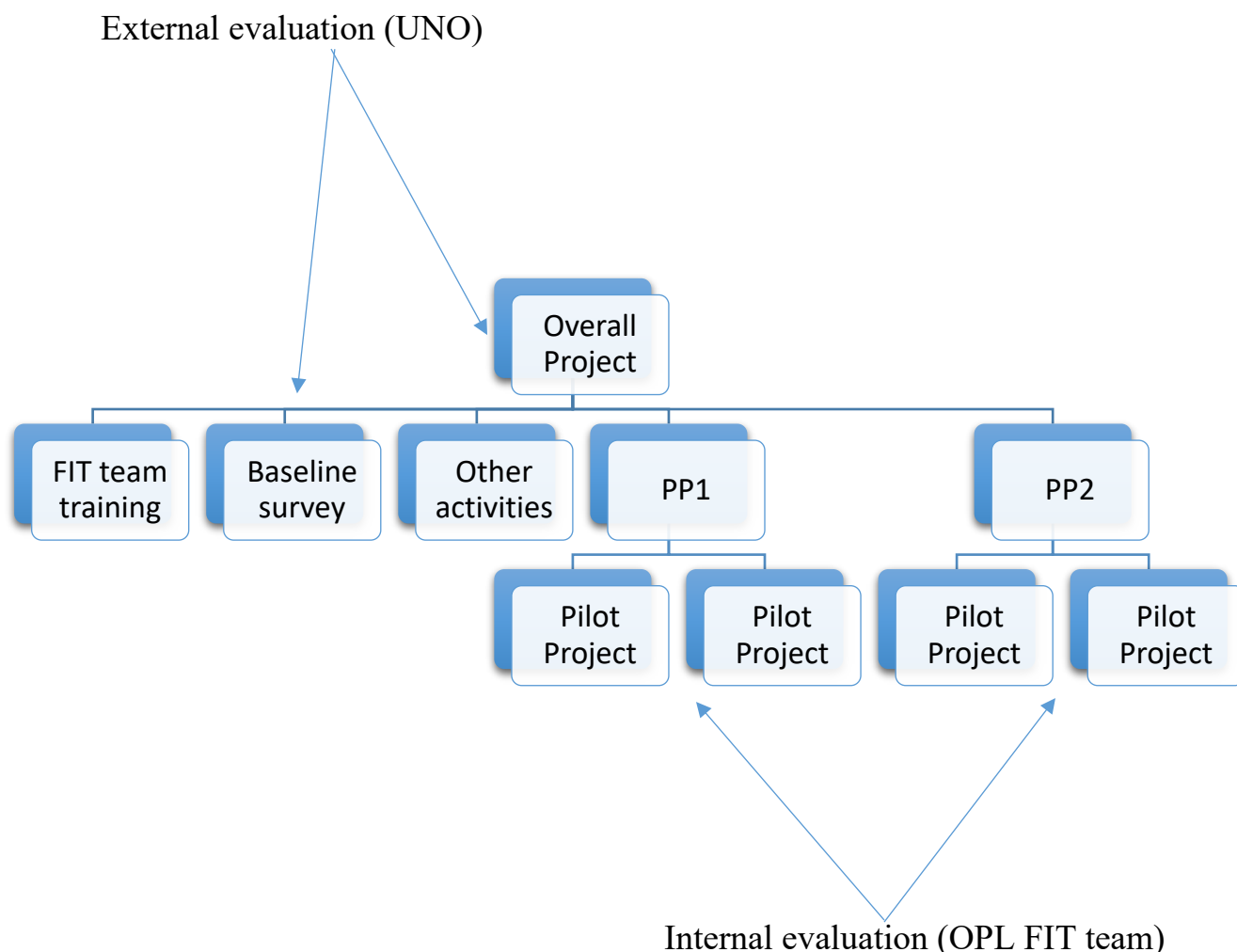
Second, a series of facilitation trainings were held for each of the three (3) tiers of CE pilot projects: 1) community-meeting conversations & discussions, 2) community problem-solving meetings and 3) meetings for complex, large-scale or citywide collaborations (among organizations and citizens) to address community issues. These trainings were highly productive and successful, utilizing a progressive-learning strategy.

This strategy entailed moving the trainees from simple skills acquired for use in the initial community-conversation projects, by building on the lessons learned from these and the addition of the new capacities, necessary for each of the more-challenging pilot projects that followed.

**Evaluation Training.** The final major component of the project was training members of both the CORE and FIT teams in process and outcome evaluation. As shown in Diagram 1, the CORE TEAM was responsible (with the assistance of the university evaluators) for developing and conducting a base-line community survey (see Chapter III Outcome Study), as well overseeing and assisting the FIT teams in the design, implementation and evaluation their own pilot projects.

The two-day evaluation training for FIT team members included basic program-research concepts and methods, evaluation design, data collection and analysis and report writing. More specifically, the learning and understanding about the use of a logic model, pre- and post-tests and process and outcome evaluation components, proved to be most important for FIT team members, especially in relation to pilot-project proposal development.

**Diagram 1 The Roles of External (University) & Internal (Self) Evaluators**



In particular, the trainings on process and outcome evaluation helped them better understand the need to accurately describe all aspects of their projects (the purpose, goals/objectives and expected outputs and outcomes, etc.) in their proposals. Their process and outcome studies then, simply and most-basically, became a matter of comparing what they had proposed and expected with what actually occurred.



During the evaluation-training sessions, it became clear to the program evaluators that a “**standardization**” of the pilot-project proposals would be essential, so that the CORE TEAM would be able to **evaluate and approve** them, based on a set of **established criteria**. The evaluators recommended therefore, that the CORE TEAM create and implement a **pilot-project proposal template**, which they successfully accomplished.

Figure 2 is Pilot-Project Proposal Template which was created for and employed in this project:

## Figure 2 OPL Community-Engagement Pilot-Project Template

**Team Name** \_\_\_\_\_

This is an overview of what you will think through using this template. Throughout the template you will find explanation and examples to help you fill out the template for your project.

Intention		Design		Evaluation	
Purpose/Goal Why and what?	Planned Outcomes What difference do you want to make?	Activities What do you plan to do?	Resources What do you need?	Count Outputs What did you produce?	Measure Outcomes Did it work?

### Purpose Statement

Why do this? What problem or issue do you want to address? What’s the local context or condition that makes this project important? Who is the target population? What big picture change do you envision this project creating in the community in the long run?

(The project should be community centric and connect to the library’s strategic plan.)

*Ex: The children of Omaha’s working class families living below the poverty line will develop reading skills necessary to enter kindergarten, ready to learn, subsequently leading to greater success in life.*

**Note about Goals for Initial Pilot Project:** The IMLS grant pilot projects are about creating a collaborative culture through community engagement. There are many levels of “engagement”, from forming a new connection or a new perspective, to making a long-term commitment to work together on a project. In our initial pilot project, it’s reasonable to focus on forming new connections.

### Goal of Proposed Project

What are you going to do?

*Ex: Convene a meeting of key literacy and education stakeholders in Omaha to learn who is doing what in this area and look for opportunities to collaborate.*



## Why This Approach?

How will this project make progress towards achieving the purpose?

*Ex: There are many organizations involved in literacy in Omaha. Many of them duplicate services and likely compete with each other for both clients and funding. These agencies don't typically connect with each other. This project intends to create an opportunity for stakeholders to meet in a neutral space with a facilitator to share their vision for Omaha's families, how they each provide services, and explore ways to achieve more with limited resources by working together.*

## Planned Outcomes

Also called "results" or "objectives," outcomes reflect what you want your program to achieve. They are the changes in beliefs, attitudes, skills, knowledge, behavior and action your program produces. They answer the question: "What difference does your program make?" Outcomes are:

- Short term - Changes in awareness, beliefs, attitudes, skills, knowledge
- Mid-term - Often stated as changes in behavior, practice or decisions based on the acquisition of short term outcomes
- Long-term – Often stated as changes in condition or altered status in target population based on mid-term behavior changes. Long-term outcomes are often called "impacts". It's hard to correlate one specific program to long term community impacts but it's good to be aware of your big goals ;)

Many people confuse Outcomes and Outputs. Since the difference between the two is critical to successful evaluation, we want to make sure this concept is clear.

- Outputs are the measurable PRODUCTS of your project's activities. They are something that was done or made.
- Outcomes are the RESULTS/ACHIEVEMENTS of your activities. They are something that has changed as a result of what you've done.

Outcomes should include:

- How many (the amount of the population that you expect to achieve change)
- Who (population you're targeting for change)
- What (condition, behavior, characteristic that will change)
- How much (the amount of change intended)
- When (the timeframe in which the change will occur)

### *Examples*

- 80% of participating women show increased knowledge of job hunting strategies after two months in the program.
- 50% of the stakeholder groups in the Benson branch area involved in literacy will attend a meeting and report a greater awareness of others working in this area.
- 80% of attendees will report creating connections that they intend to follow up on within a month of their original meeting.
- 80% of meeting attendees will report that the meeting was a good use of their time.

**What outcomes do you hope for?**

**What is your timeframe?** (From start to end of this project considering constraints or goals)

## Activities

Activities are the actions that your organization will undertake to implement your program in order to achieve desired outcomes. Ultimately, you count the output of your activities (services, processes, things done to, for, or with the target population such as meetings, outreach or training) to allow you to evaluate your project. You want to learn from this process to see if you need to alter activities to meet your goal in the future.

Each activity could require multiple tasks, and also have multiple planned outputs. For example:

Activity	Task	Planned Output
Research target population	talk to Joan, look at professional association	spent 4 hours researching, list of stakeholders, contacts added to mothernode
Invite	phone calls, flyers, emails	invited 40 people
Meeting	logistics, show up, setup	20 people attended meeting
Follow-up	thank you notes	wrote 15 thank you notes

**What activities will you do?**

## Resources

Resources can include many things. Consider:

- Knowledge - What do you need to know?
  - investigate (who to invite, who to survey, find stakeholders)
  - research the issue (facts, history)
- Time - How much time will you or others need to:
  - call or visit key stakeholders
  - plan curriculum
  - logistics
  - deliver the meeting
  - follow-up after meeting
- People- Who will be involved in delivering the project?
- Technology - What technology, tools or equipment do you need?
- Stuff - What else? (meeting space, paper, food)

Use your meeting design checklist to help think this through ;)

## What resources will you need to deliver your project?

Once you've completed your activities, in order to complete your project you need to evaluate it. You planned something, you did something and now you need to determine if it led to your desired outcome. You won't fill this out until you've completed your activities.

### Actual Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs are the tangible and direct products of a program's activities, i.e. number of trainings or meetings, number of individuals receiving the training or attending the meeting. Outcomes are what has changed as a result of your activities.

- **Ex. Output:** *we planned a meeting for 20 people, convened one meeting and 22 people came.*
- **Ex. Outcome:** *12 people exchanged contact information and reported greater knowledge of all organizations offering similar services. Two people reported planning future collaborations.*

## What were your outputs?

## What are your outcomes?

What did you learn? Did you get the outcomes you anticipated? If not, why? What would you do different next time?

*These resources go into more detail and provide examples that may be useful for planning your project.*

- [A good PowerPoint presentation to a California library on logic models is in Dropbox under:  
FIT Team\Evaluation Resources\Logic Model.ppt](#)
- Logic Model Tutorial – 15 minute narrated tutorial on understanding a logic model.  
<http://www.usablellc.net/resources/logic-model-tutorial>

- Logic Model Handbook from United Way - although it uses slightly different language, there are good examples of outcomes, activities (strategies), inputs and outputs.  
[http://www.vsuw.org/file/logic\\_model\\_handbook\\_updated\\_2008.pdf](http://www.vsuw.org/file/logic_model_handbook_updated_2008.pdf)
- [innonet.org](http://innonet.org) – Logic Model Builder and Outcomes Evaluation Builder

### ***Assessment of CE Pilot Projects***

As part of the process study, an important element of the assessment of the implementation of the OPL CE model, is an analysis of whether and how-well the pilot projects aligned with and furthered OPL's strategic imperatives or core goals and addressed the four issue-related, focus-area objectives. This qualitative analysis, conducted by the external, local-university evaluators, is based on their examination and integration of data from three different sources:

1. Evaluations of the pilot projects by community participants at the end of the community meetings (see pilot-project "Outcomes Table" form, Appendix B.2),
2. Self-evaluations conducted and written-up by the pilot-project facilitators themselves (for examples, see the "IMLS Pilot-Project Evaluation Plan" and "Outputs Table" documents, Appendix B.2 and the evaluation summaries of each pilot in the OPL blog <http://www.communityengagement.us/>).
3. Via direct observations of pilot-project community meetings by the external grant evaluators (three (3) examples of their observation summaries are also shown in the OPL blog).

Tables 1-4 list the 19 CE pilot projects grouped by Levels (1-3). These tables also contain the mean (average) score of each pilot project (see column 2), representing the relative effectiveness of each in furthering the two core goals and addressing the four issue-related objectives of the CE initiative.

**Table 1 Ranking/Scores of OPL Community-Engagement Level-1 Pilot Project Goal/Objective Attainment**

Level 1 Pilot Project	Mean	CORE GOALS		ISSUE RELATED OBJECTIVES			
		Create NEXUS	Extend Reach	Socio-Economic Divide	Inclusivity, Opportunity, Pathways, Leadership	Economic Growth, Services, Infrastructure	Citizen Participation and Collaboration
Senior Care/Aging Issues	4.0	4	4	4	3	5	4
English as Second Language	4.0	4	5	4	3	4	4
Local Foods Movement	4.0	4	5	4	3	4	4

Recycling Discussion	3.7	4	4	3	3	4	4
Low Voter Turnout	3.3	3	4	3	3	3	4
Refugees/Public Transportation	2.8	3	3	4	3	4	3
Hopes/Dreams - HS Education	2.3	2	2	3	2	2	3
Combined	3.42	3.4	3.8	3.5	2.8	3.6	3.6

Scale: 1=not effective; 2=somewhat effective; 3=effective; 4=very effective; 5=extremely effective

The mean scores of the pilot projects allow for a ranking of the relative (compared to the other pilots), overall effectiveness of the pilot projects (based on a Likert scale of 1-5, where 1=not effective, 2=somewhat effective, 3=effective, 4=very effective and 5=extremely effective). These mean scores are the average of the six individual goal and objective attainment scores (see columns 3-8) for each pilot project.

The individual core-goal and issue-objective attainment scores are based on the same Likert scale (1-5) and allow for a ranking of the relative effectiveness of each of the six attainment areas for each pilot project. In both instances, the scores represent the subjective assessment and integration of the data from three (3) sources (as described above) by the CE grant-project evaluators.

**Table 2 Ranking/Scores of OPL Community-Engagement Level-2 Pilot Project Goal/Objective Attainment**

Level 2 Pilot Projects	Mean	CORE GOALS		ISSUE RELATED OBJECTIVES			
		Create NEXUS	Extend Reach	Socio-Economic Divide	Inclusivity, Opportunity, Pathways, Leadership	Economic Growth, Services, Infrastructure	Citizen Participation and Collaboration
Improving Online Access	4.8	5	5	5	4	5	5
Senior Care/Services Solutions	4.5	5	5	4	4	5	4
Unemployment Issues	4.3	4	4	5	4	5	4
Building Community/Citizenship	4.0	4	4	4	4	4	4
Prisoner Reentry Organizations	3.5	3	3	4	4	3	4
Voter Education Douglas County	2.2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Combined	3.88	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.0

Scale: 1=not effective; 2=somewhat effective; 3=effective; 4=very effective; 5=extremely effective

Major factors considered to determine the relative effectiveness of the implementation of the pilot projects in addressing core-goals and objectives include:

1. Whether the project created an opportunity for citizens and organizations to come together for discussion and collaboration (NEXUS);

2. Provided an opportunity for new and more citizens and organizations to experience and interact with the library (LONG REACH);
3. Addressed issues related to Omaha's socio-economic divide;
4. Increased inclusivity through the participation of traditionally-excluded minorities, including the provision of new potential pathways and leadership opportunities;
5. Addressed economic growth, improvement of the quality and equitable distribution of public services and infrastructure; and
6. Increased and improved citizen and organizational participation and collaboration.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 3 Ranking/Scores of OPL Community-Engagement Level-3 Pilot Project Goal/Objective Attainment**

Level 3 Pilot Projects	Mean	CORE GOALS		ISSUE RELATED OBJECTIVES			
		Create NEXUS	Extend Reach	Socio-Economic Divide	Inclusivity, Opportunity, Pathways, Leadership	Economic Growth, Services, Infrastructure	Citizen Participation and Collaboration
Prisoner Reentry Organizations <sup>8</sup>	4.8	5	5	5	4	5	5
Historic Preservation Project	3.7	4	4	3	3	4	4
Talent Drain/Outmigration	3.7	4	4	3	3	4	4
Douglas County Health Engagement	3.7	3	4	4	3	4	4
Unemployment/Education Project	3.0	3	3	4	2	3	3
Combined	3.78	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.0	4.0	4.0

Scale: 1=not effective; 2=somewhat effective; 3=effective; 4=very effective; 5=extremely effective

As noted earlier, the pilot projects were designed to produce increasingly-complex, multi-dimensional and goal-oriented program outputs, at three levels: 1) basic community discussions, 2) community organizing and problem-solving and 3) large-scale and/or city-wide projects. Therefore, expectations for the outputs and program

<sup>7</sup> While there were no more-detailed, written or objective criteria established for these measurements of project implementation, these could be developed in the future to measure and evaluate both program outputs and outcomes in larger and longer-term projects.

<sup>8</sup> This prisoner reentry project was initially developed and intended as a Level-2 Pilot Project, which was held April 10, 2014. It actually developed, however, into a large-scale, highly-complex issue project with 24 representatives from reentry organizations and service providers attending. As a result and for evaluation purposes in this report, the evaluators have re-classified it as a Level-3 Pilot Project. Similarly, the originally designed Level-3 prisoner reentry Pilot Project had to be scaled back to accommodate scheduling issues of various agencies. It evolved into a smaller-scale, internal-organization facilitation project for one re-entry agency and was therefore reclassified as a Level-2 Pilot Project.

performance also increased for higher levels of complexity and difficulty.

For example, in Level 2, with FIT team members having gained additional experience, it was expected that the numbers of invitees and attendees would also increase. Similarly, more organizations would be invited and attend and more-difficult and broader socio-economic issues would be addressed, and so forth. Appendix B.3, compiled by OPL, lists the pilot projects by level, showing the numbers of invitations, attendees and percentage of attendance for each.

**Table 4 Combined Scores of All OPL Community-Engagement Pilot Projects (Levels 1-3) Goal/Objective Attainment**

All Pilot Projects Levels 1-3	Mean	CORE GOALS		ISSUE RELATED OBJECTIVES			
		Create NEXUS	Extend Reach	Socio-Economic Divide	Inclusivity, Opportunity, Pathways, Leadership	Economic Growth, Services, Infrastructure	Citizen Participation and Collaboration
Combined	3.66	3.67	3.87	3.70	3.17	3.87	3.87

Scale: 1=not effective; 2=somewhat effective; 3=effective; 4=very effective; 5=extremely effective

As shown in Table 4 above, the combined mean score of all 19 pilot projects was 3.66, indicating that overall, they were "effective to very effective" in furthering the core goals and objectives of the CE project. The pilots ranked highest in three areas, with combined scores of 3.87 (or were "very effective" according to the scale) in extending the reach of the library; addressing economic growth, public services and infrastructure; and improving and increasing citizen participation and collaboration. Comparatively they were least effective, although still scoring 3.17 or were "effective," in improving inclusivity and creating pathways and leadership opportunities for traditionally-excluded persons and groups.

As expected, as the FIT teams became more skilled, proficient and experienced, the combined performance-scores of the pilot projects improved from 3.42 at Level 1, to 3.88 and 3.78 for Levels 2 and 3, respectively. This improvement in scores was achieved despite the fact that the external evaluators "factored in" higher performance expectations (as discussed previously), for the more-difficult and complex projects in the higher tiers.

Taken together, these findings provide supporting evidence for the conclusions of the external evaluators, that this component (and indeed all components) of the CE project were implemented successfully, as originally envisioned and proposed.

### III. OUTCOME STUDY OF GRANT PROJECT

In this chapter, we report the findings from our outcome study of the **Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement** library-demonstration project. The purpose of the outcome study is to document and report on the development, testing and use of project-evaluation tools, indicators, measures and findings.

To this end, we provided evaluation trainings to the CORE and FIT teams and assisted/consulted with OPL on a base-line community survey. The survey was administered by a variety of methods and then portions of it were adapted for use by the FIT teams in their self-evaluations of the pilot projects.

#### A. OPL Community Survey

A Community Engagement Survey was designed by OPL, in collaboration with CPAR, to provide outcomes development and evaluation components. After running a baseline survey in October 2013, the same instrument was used for all three pilot projects (2013-2014) and a concluding survey in October 2014.

There were seven methods by which the survey was administered. Table 5 lists the number of responses by survey type. Overall, there were **984 completed surveys**, with the majority of the surveys completed using the paper instrument.

**Table 5 Responses by Survey Type**

SURVEY TYPE	Number	Percent
Baseline-online	135	13.7
Baseline-paper	183	18.6
Conclusion-online	163	16.6
Conclusion-paper	277	28.2
Pilot Project 1	71	7.2
Pilot Project 2	84	8.5
Pilot Project 3	71	7.2
Total	984	100.0

Tables 6 through 8 present the number of responses by **race and ethnicity** by the seven data collection methods. We asked for race and ethnicity using two questions similar to those used by the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition, we combined the two questions into a single table that summarizes the respondents into two groups – White, non-Hispanic/Latino and persons of color (minority).



**Table 6 Are you of Hispanic or Latino background?**

SURVEY TYPE	Percent		Number
	No	Yes	
Baseline-online	95.5	4.5	134
Baseline-paper	95.1	4.9	183
Conclusion-online	97.7	2.3	132
Conclusion-paper	95.4	4.6	259
Pilot Project 1	96.9	3.1	64
Pilot Project 2	98.8	1.3	80
Pilot Project 3	95.5	4.5	66
Total	96.1	3.9	918
2013 ACS	88.3	11.7	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013 1-year Estimate; prepared by UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, June 2015

The tables show that regardless of the method, there was an **underrepresentation of Hispanic/Latino respondents**. The 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) from the U.S. Census Bureau estimates **11.7%** of Douglas County's population was Hispanic/Latino, compared to about **4.0%** in the surveys (see Table 6).

Table 7 lists the respondents by race. As can be seen in the table, the overall racial distribution of the respondents was **very similar** to the results from the ACS, with a slight underrepresentation of Asians. However, the **representation varied by survey method** – Whites were much more likely to respond using the online survey.

**Table 7 Which of the following best-describes your primary race?**

SURVEY TYPE	Percent						Number
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	White or Caucasian	Two or more races	Some other race	
Baseline-online	0.0	0.0	5.2	88.9	3.0	3.0	135
Baseline-paper	0.5	0.5	12.6	71.6	9.3	5.5	183
Conclusion-online	0.0	0.0	4.3	94.4	0.6	0.6	161
Conclusion-paper	1.5	3.4	18.0	69.3	5.0	2.7	261
Pilot Project 1	0.0	0.0	4.8	90.5	3.2	1.6	63
Pilot Project 2	1.1	2.5	17.5	78.8	1.3	0.0	80
Pilot Project 3	1.5	0.0	7.7	87.7	3.1	0.0	65
Total	0.6	1.3	11.2	80.3	4.2	2.4	948
2013 ACS	0.3	3.0	11.0	80.5	3.0	2.2	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013 1-year Estimate; prepared by UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, June 2015

Because of the underrepresentation of Hispanic/Latino respondents, Table 8 illustrates that the **population of color was significantly underrepresented** in the combined survey results.

**Table 8 Summary of Race & Ethnicity (Based on previous two tables)**

SURVEY TYPE	Percent		Number
	White, non-Hispanic/Latino	Hispanic/Latino or non-White	
Baseline-online	85.9	14.1	132
Baseline-paper	71.0	29.0	183
Conclusion-online	93.2	6.8	161
Conclusion-paper	67.8	32.2	261
Pilot Project 1	87.5	12.5	64
Pilot Project 2	77.5	22.5	80
Pilot Project 3	84.8	15.2	66
Total	78.6	21.4	950
2013 ACS	71.2	28.8	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013 1-year Estimate; prepared by UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, June 2015

## B. Survey Results

This section highlights some of the results of the surveys. It must be remembered that the survey was conducted with people who had some contact with OPL and were willing to complete the survey. Therefore, the results cannot be assumed to reflect the Omaha community as a whole and only represent the sample who completed the survey.

In this section, the responses from the baseline and the concluding survey are combined and analyzed. Responses from the pilot projects are not included because they were obtained from a select group and not the general population. Detailed tables can be found in the appendices.

Appendix C.1 presents the results for all survey types, while Appendix C.2 only provides summaries for the baseline and concluding surveys. These summaries provide the basis for the following analysis.

Most of the respondents were long-term residents of Omaha, as more than one-half (52.3%) of the respondents have lived in the Omaha area from more than 25 years. Figure 3 summarizes the questions that address the respondents' engagement with the community.

Not surprisingly almost all the respondents (97.6%) had visited a library in the past 12 months. Other activities in which more than 75% of the respondents participated were visiting a city park, 91.2%; registering to vote, 90.4%; voting in the last presidential election, 83.8%; spending time with people of a different culture, 77.7%; and participating in a community event, 76.9%. Less than one-half of the respondents indicated that they spent time with people who spoke a different language (48.5%), participated in their neighborhood association (37.5%), or collaborated to solve a problem (28.4%).

**Figure 3 Responses to Questions Addressing the Respondents Engagement in the Community, Ranked by Percent Who Said Yes**

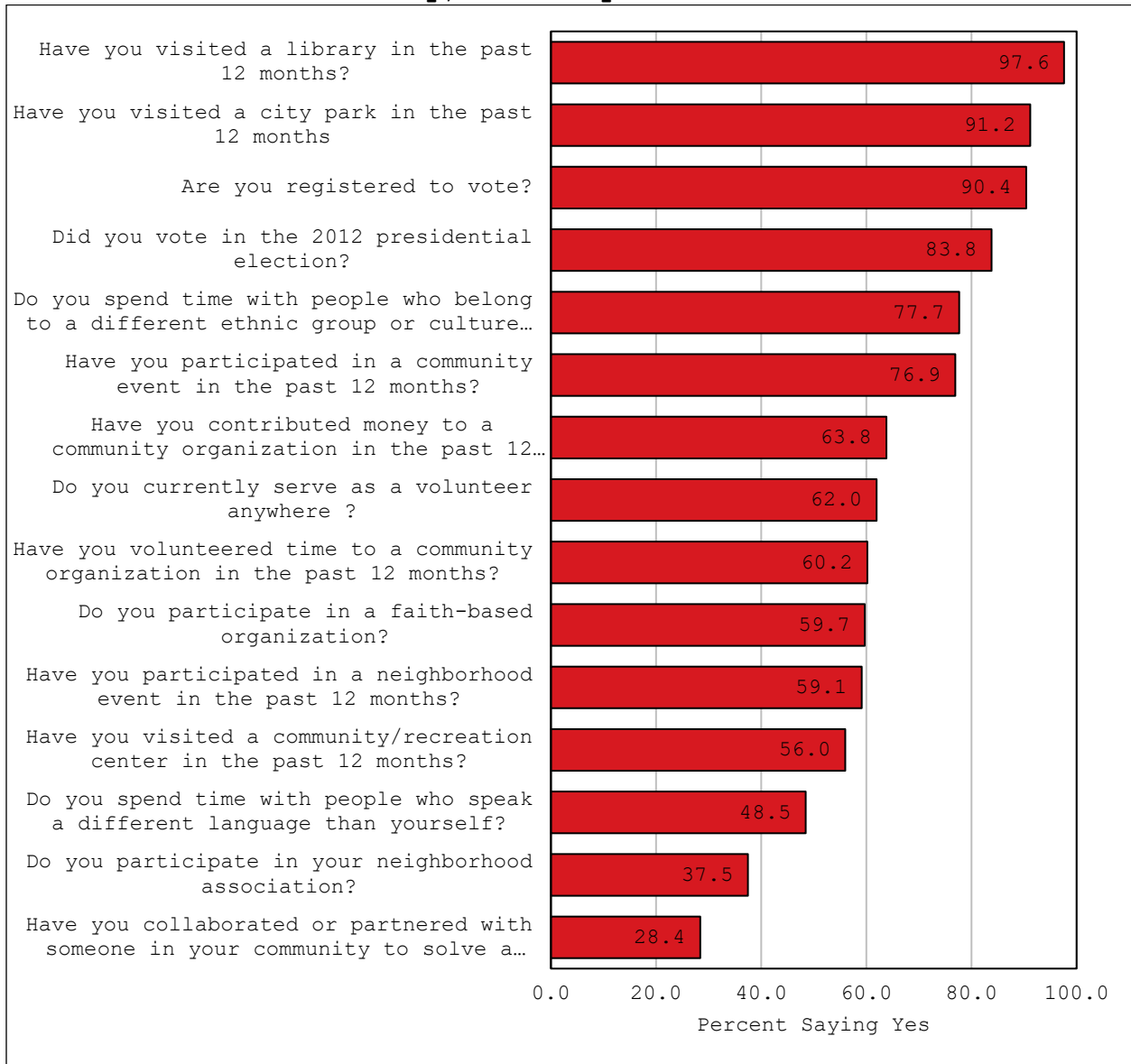


Figure 4 looks at **how-connected** respondents were to **community organizations** in Omaha. Respondents were **most connected** to the **volunteer and charity** community and **least connected** to the **government community**. The respondents represented in Figure 4 are also grouped into two categories, mostly connected and mostly unconnected, using the following categories:

- Mostly connected—organizations where the percentage of respondents who indicated they were very connected or extremely connected was greater than the percentage of respondents who indicated they were slightly connected or not connected.

- Mostly unconnected—organizations where the percentage of respondents who indicated they were very connected or extremely connected was less than the percentage of respondents who indicated they were slightly connected or not connected.

Using this rubric the following was found:

- Mostly connected organizations.
  - Volunteer and charity community.
  - Education community.
  - Your neighborhood.
  - The Omaha community in general.
- Mostly unconnected organizations.
  - Health and wellness community.
  - Arts community.
  - Businesses.
  - Government.

The **connectedness gap for government** was **especially strong** with 58.1% of the respondents indicated that they were not connected or slightly connected, while only 13.8% said they were very connected or extremely connected.

**Figure 4 Responses to the Question “How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha,” Ranked by Percent of Respondents Who Said Very Connected or Extremely Connected**

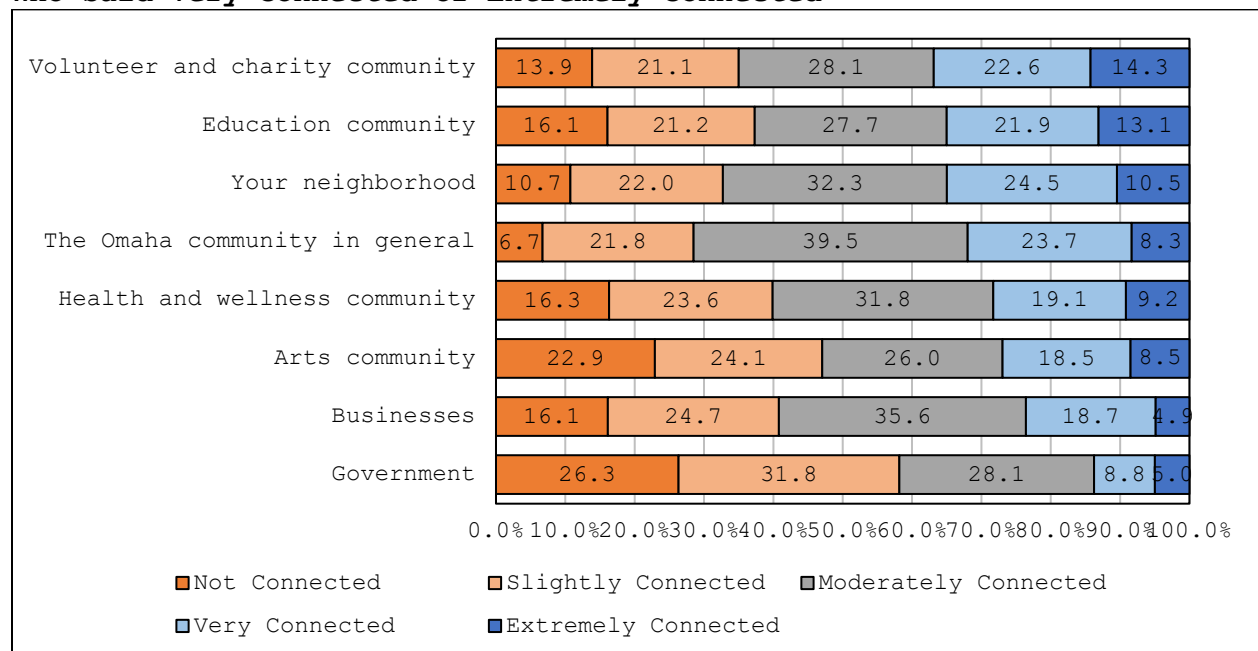


Figure 5 shows what respondents **think about the Omaha area**. In general they **felt positive** about the area:

- 67.4% agreed or strongly agreed that the Omaha area was thriving.
- 61.9% agreed or strongly agreed that the Omaha area was stable.
- 54.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Omaha area was in crisis.
- 44.9% agreed or strongly agreed that the Omaha area was safe.
- 37.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Omaha area was vulnerable.

**Figure 5 Responses to the Statement "Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area," Ranked by Percent of Respondents Who Said Agree or Strongly Agree**

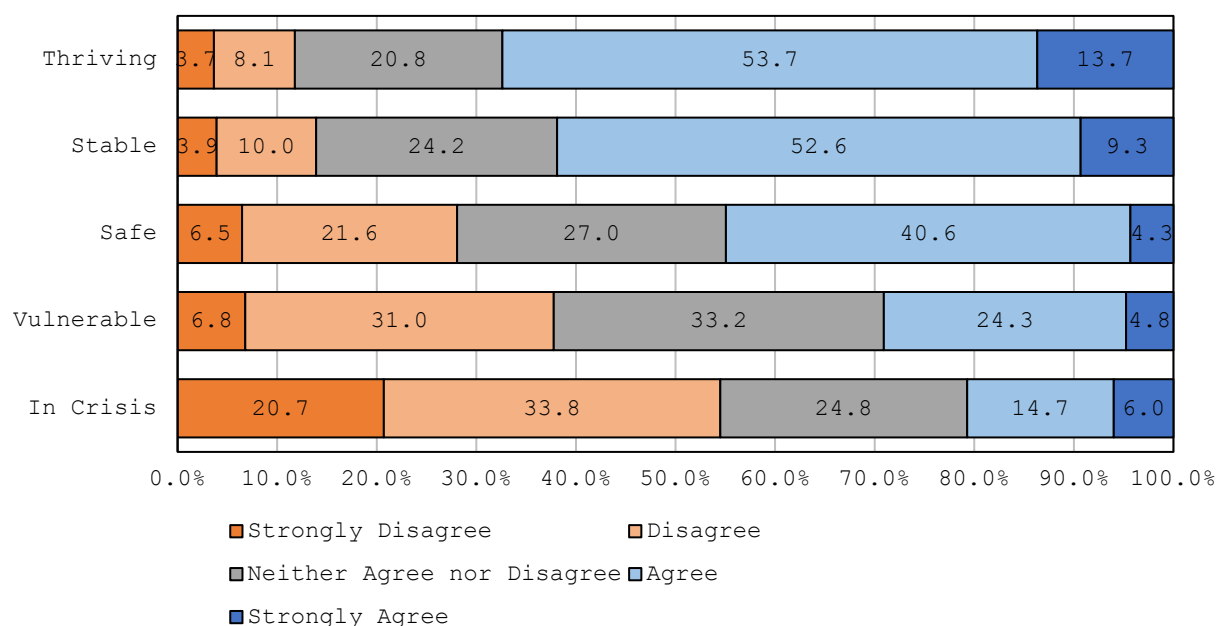
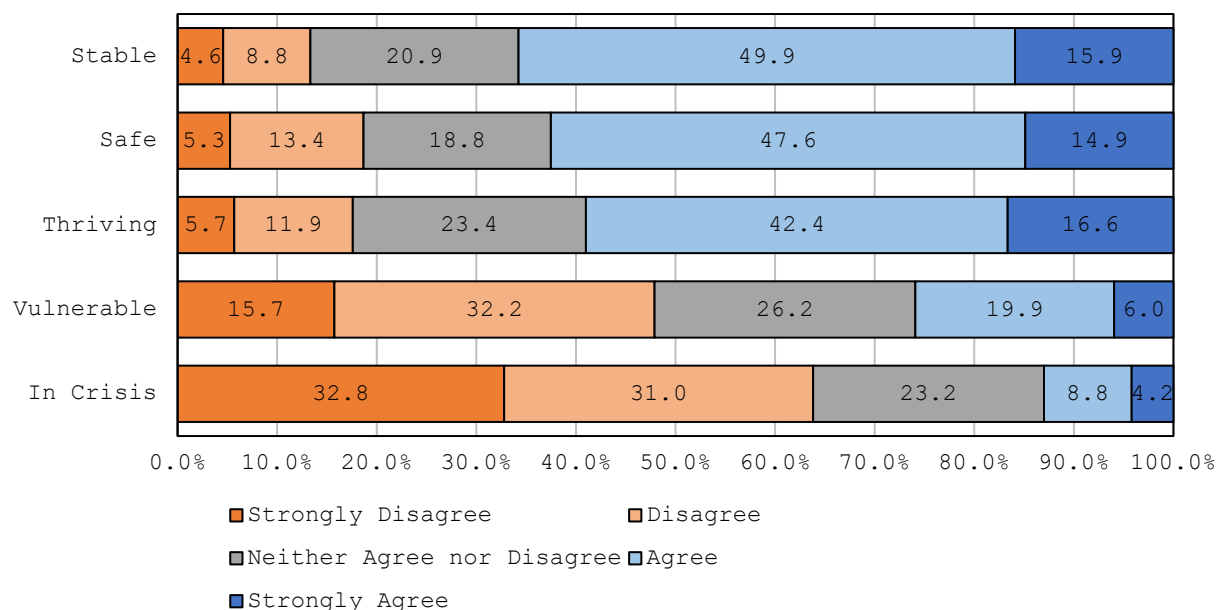


Figure 6 shows that respondents also felt **positive** about their **neighborhood** or area of **Omaha in which they live**:

- 65.8% agreed or strongly agreed that the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which they live was stable.
- 63.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which they live was in crisis.
- 62.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which they live was safe.
- 59.0% agreed or strongly agreed that the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which they live was thriving.
- 47.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which they live was vulnerable.

**Figure 6 Responses to the Statement "Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live," Ranked by Percent of Respondents Who Said Agree or Strongly Agree**



### Results by Demographic Characteristics

Although the preceding analysis presents an overall summary of the survey, the results vary by the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the respondents to the survey vary demographically from the general population. Specifically, the respondents are likely to be older, married, home owners, White, non-Hispanic, have higher education and higher incomes.

Table 9 presents the results of a statistical analysis using T-tests to determine where there were statistically-significant responses based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents using the following classification of the demographic variables:

- Age                                      aged 45 years or older, aged under 45 years
- Race/Ethnicity                      Minority (Persons of color), Non-minority (White, non-Hispanic)
- Home owner                          Renter, Owner
- Marital status                        Married or partnered, Currently unmarried
- Education                            Bachelor's or higher, Less than bachelor's
- Income                                 \$50,000 or more, Less than \$50,000

Table 9 lists each question and indicates where there was a statistically-significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) for each demographic variable. The label in the table shows which of the two attributes for each of the significant variables is the highest.

For example, for the question “How many years have you lived in the Omaha area,” owners and persons aged 45 years or older are more likely to have lived in the Omaha area for 25 years or more.

Tables showing the values for each of the attributes can be found in Appendix C.3. Looking at the table you can see that, in general, the respondents who are **more engaged** in the community and have a **more positive view** of the Omaha area and of their neighborhood are more likely to be:

- Aged 45 years or older.
- Non-minority (White, non-Hispanic).
- Home owner.
- Married or partnered.
- Have a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- Have an income of \$50,000 or more.

**Table 9 Survey Responses by Demographic Characteristics**

Question	Response	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Home owner	Marital status	Education	Income
How many years have you lived in the Omaha area?	% 25 years or more	45 or older		Owner			
Are you registered to vote?	% Yes	45 or older	Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election?	% Yes	45 or older	Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Do you participate in your neighborhood association?	% Yes	45 or older		Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Do you participate in a faith-based organization?	% Yes	45 or older		Owner	Married or partnered		
Have you visited a city park in the past 12 months	% Yes	Under 45		Owner			\$50,000 or more
Have you visited a library in the past 12 months?	% Yes					Bachelor's or higher	
Have you visited a community/recreation center in the past 12 months?	% Yes		Minority	Owner	Married or partnered		
Have you participated in a neighborhood event in the past 12 months?	% Yes			Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Have you participated in a community event in the past 12 months?	% Yes		Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Have you volunteered time to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes			Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more

Question	Response	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Home owner	Marital status	Education	Income
Have you contributed money to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes	45 or older		Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Do you currently serve as a volunteer anywhere (i.e., church, community service organization, senior citizens center, hospital, etc.)	% Yes	45 or older		Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Have you collaborated or partnered with someone in your community to solve a problem?	% Yes	45 or older	Minority			Bachelor's or higher	
Do you spend time with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% Yes	Under 45	Minority	Renter			Less than \$50,000
How much time do you spend with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% at least once a week		Minority				
Do you spend time with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% Yes	Under 45	Minority				
How much time do you spend with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% at least once a week		Minority				
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--The Omaha community in general	Mean					Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Your neighborhood	Mean	45 or older		Owner		Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Businesses	Mean						\$50,000 or more
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Arts community	Mean					Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Education community	Mean			Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Government	Mean						\$50,000 or more
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Health and wellness community	Mean	45 or older		Owner	Married or partnered		\$50,000 or more
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Volunteer and charity community	Mean			Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Thriving	Mean		Non-minority			Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Safe	Mean	Under 45		Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more



Question	Response	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Home owner	Marital status	Education	Income
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Stable	Mean		Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Vulnerable	Mean	45 or older	Minority		Currently unmarried	Less than bachelor's	Less than \$50,000
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--In Crisis	Mean		Minority	Renter	Currently unmarried	Less than bachelor's	Less than \$50,000
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Thriving	Mean		Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Safe	Mean		Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Stable	Mean		Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Vulnerable	Mean		Minority	Renter	Currently unmarried	Less than bachelor's	Less than \$50,000
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--In Crisis	Mean		Minority	Renter	Currently unmarried	Less than bachelor's	Less than \$50,000
Please select the bracket that best reflects your age:	% 45 or older		Non-minority	Owner			
Which of the following best describes your primary race?	% Minority	Under 45		Renter	Currently unmarried	Less than bachelor's	Less than \$50,000
Do you own or rent your current residence?	% Renter	Under 45	Minority		Currently unmarried	Less than bachelor's	Less than \$50,000
What is your marital status?	% Married or partnered		Non-minority	Owner		Bachelor's or higher	\$50,000 or more
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	% Bachelor's or higher		Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered		\$50,000 or more
What was your total household income last year from all sources in the following categories?	% \$50,000 or more		Non-minority	Owner	Married or partnered	Bachelor's or higher	

In addition to the baseline and conclusion survey reviewed above, OPL collected similar survey information from the participants in the pilot projects. In reviewing these results, it appears that the pilot project participants did not reflect the same characteristics and perspectives as the library patrons who completed either the baseline or conclusion survey.

They were likely to have lived in Omaha for fewer years and more likely to be registered to vote and had voted in the 2012 election. Even though the pilot project participants were less likely, to have

visited a library in the past 12 months, they generally were more active in other community activities. They were more likely to have visited a community center, participated in a community event, volunteered in a community organization, contributed money to a community organization, volunteered in other places, and partnered to solve a problem.

The participants in the pilot projects also were **more connected** to the Omaha community. They spent more time with people who **spoke a different language** and who were of a **different ethnic group or culture**. When asked to which community organizations they felt connected, they indicated they were more connected to the Omaha community in general, businesses, government, and volunteer and charity organizations than were the persons who completed the baseline or conclusion survey.

When given descriptions of their neighborhood and the city of Omaha, the pilot project participants had a **more positive view**. They were more likely to feel that both the city and their neighborhoods were thriving, safe, and stable. In addition, they were likely to feel that their neighborhood was **not in crisis or vulnerable**.

Looking at the demographic characteristics, it also appears that the pilot project participants differed from those who completed the baseline or conclusion survey. They were younger, had higher incomes and education levels, more likely to be currently married or partnered, own their own homes, and be White, non-Hispanic.

Although the OPL made great efforts to recruit participants in the **pilot projects**, the **participants were not representative of the OPL patrons** who completed the baseline or conclusion survey. While it may be difficult to reflect totally the characteristic of their patrons, if OPL continues its CE activities, **it should make a concerted effort to recruit participants from a variety of settings**, otherwise it will continue to **involve only those people who are more active and connected to the Omaha community**.

### **C. Outcome Study Findings**

OPL **successfully** developed, administered, analyzed and provided project outcome findings to IMLS in their final grant report and in this evaluation report. The **primary purpose** of the community survey was to gather **baseline information** about the citizens of Omaha and their perceptions, so that the library can better understand and serve them.

In addition, the findings provide OPL with a wealth of information to continue to develop new, larger, longer-term, more-inclusive and more-collaborative CE projects in the **next phase** of their CE initiative. In particular, the information collected provides an **opportunity to focus** future efforts on certain demographic cohorts, geographic areas,

issues and problem areas, related to the core-goals and objectives for CE in the OPL strategic plan.

The following last chapter of this report, provides further insights and recommendations, on how the findings of both the process and outcome studies might be best used by OPL in future CE efforts.

#### IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter of the report, we present a **summary and integration** of key process and outcome findings. In some instances, this includes additional information not presented in Chapters II and III, which focus and report on “more-traditional” evaluation measures and outcomes.

From these, however, we are able to draw conclusions regarding which **elements or components** of the **Omaha CE model**, were **most important or critical** to the successful implementation of the project and the positive outcomes that were obtained. We then also point out areas identified during this project, where **significant opportunities** for **further development and improvement**, can and should be sought in ongoing efforts (beyond the pilot-project stages) in Omaha.

Similarly, we also identify **potential barriers or threats** to continuing CE activities and services. With both the opportunities and barriers, we provide **recommendations** on how best to pursue or address them.

##### A. Integrating Project Process and Outcome Findings

As reported in the process and outcomes studies in the previous chapters, the project was **implemented as originally envisioned and proposed**, with only normal and relatively-minor issues or problems emerging, that were quickly and rather-easily handled by the Core Team (project leadership). Similarly, **outcome measures were successfully developed** in the creation of a broad-based community survey, which was used to collect **baseline perceptual data** from Omaha citizens and then subsequently **adapted for evaluation** of the 19 pilot-project community meetings.

Our observations and analyses of both sets of findings, support our conclusions that **certain factors, elements and/or components** present in the Omaha project, were largely responsible for the successes and positive outcomes achieved during the project. In our view, it is highly-likely therefore, that these same factors would also be **very important, critical and/or essential for achieving success** in CE initiatives undertaken elsewhere, as follows:

##### 10 Factors, Elements and/or Components Contributing to CE Success

- 1) A library **strategic plan and mission statement** which identifies **community-engagement** as a **core function**.
- 2) A clearly delineated CE plan of action and organizational chart with **defined roles and responsibilities**, a detailed and realistic **timeline** for **task and project** completion.

- 3) Skilled and experienced library community-engagement facilitators, trainers and consultants.
- 4) Initiation, buy-in, active participation and support from highest levels of library administration and the community (Executive Director, Library Board of Trustees, Senior Management and Staff and stakeholders from all sectors and geographic/socio-economic areas of the city, etc.)
- 5) Sufficient financial support, resource allocation and eventual inclusion of CE functions in formal budgeting processes, as occurs for traditional areas of library services.
- 6) Extensive, detailed and "real-world" training (with regular opportunities for practice, learning and feedback) for library staff as "community-engagement facilitators" and project managers.

The training should include all aspects of CE philosophy and context, project goals, expectations, products and evaluation of processes and outcomes.

- 7) Progressive and staged development (i.e., starting with relatively small and simple projects, building on successes and lessons learned, and then moving to higher levels of complexity and more-ambitious citywide goals) of CE efforts and projects.
- 8) Establishment of an identifiable group of library staff that are officially-dedicated (via all or a portion of their work time) to the leadership and continuing development of the CE initiative and a specified number of projects per year.
- 9) The development of core CE goals and the selection of specific issue-area objectives for the new core-function of the library.
- 10) Establishment of a formal, ongoing feedback loop for the evaluation of CE efforts, with results cycling back to regularly-scheduled revisions of the library's strategic plan, specific CE planning, activities, projects and programming.

## **B. Opportunities, Barriers and CE Development Recommendations**

During the 2-year project period, certain findings, developments or issues emerged (some anticipated and some quite surprising), which can and should be viewed as positive opportunities for program and community advancement, while others could/would be more-likely seen as potentially-negative barriers or threats to ongoing CE and community betterment. The following findings are the potential opportunities and barriers identified during the project, with program recommendations included as appropriate:

### Positive CE Opportunities, Developments and Issues:

- 1) The **resource and asset mapping** activity undertaken as a prelude to the identification, design and implementation of the pilot projects, proved to be an **invaluable component** of OPL CE (see Appendix B.1).

**Recommendation:** Such **mapping** of interested citizens, key organizations and topics/community-issues to be pursued as CE projects, must be **a priority** and an **integral and ongoing** component of the effort. The initial community meetings and mapping that occurred for the pilot projects, should only be considered a **starting point** that should be **continually expanded, refined and employed** in all CE activities.

- 2) As the skills, knowledge, experience and confidence of the facilitators in training (FIT team) grew, it became apparent to the library director, library senior management and the facilitation and evaluation consultants, that the trainees were all evidencing considerable (and in some cases exceptional) **personal and professional growth and development**. The rapidity and depth of growth were largely unanticipated, but very welcome **"side" benefits or effects** of the CE initiative, with five (5) of the staff receiving promotions to new or newly-created positions. (See Appendix B.3).

**Recommendation:** CE **facilitation training** should be made familiar to all library staff and personnel (as has occurred at OPL), through either group presentations on the subject or actual training (at appropriate levels of detail and complexity), conducted by FIT team members (now formally re-named OPL Facilitators) or facilitation-training consultants. **Refresher trainings** should also be provided to facilitators as necessary and **regular de-briefing and peer-reviews of projects** should also regularly be conducted (as occurred during the pilot projects).

- 3) While the **OPL blog site** was **successfully developed and employed** as a part of this project ([www.communityengagement.us](http://www.communityengagement.us)), other investigations and implementation of digital information systems and software packages **had to be abandoned** as part of the project for a variety of reasons, or are **still under testing** by OPL. Thus the development of "virtual" CE (as described in the project proposal), through the use of such information packages (and social media sites,) still **remains an almost-completely unexplored and untried area** that **offers great potential**.

A new, **information-system-related** development that was announced toward the end of the CE grant period, is a soon-to-be-opened **Omaha Digital Library**. Now re-named **"Do Space,"** the project is in part the brainchild of former OPL Director Gary Wasdin. In an interview conducted as part of this evaluation, Wasdin stated

that, the new facility “holds great promise for community-engagement.”

Although not formally a part of the OPL system (it will be administered and operated by a non-profit organization created and funded by a local philanthropic group<sup>9</sup>), patrons will be able to access its resources with their OPL library card. Do Space describes itself as “a technology library, a digital workshop and an innovation playground.”

**Recommendation:** OPL should aggressively explore and develop all potential avenues of community-engagement activity with the new digital library, Executive Director (a former OPL employee) and staff. Do Space states that one of the reasons it is partnering with OPL, is to insure that their existing collections are available to all citizens digitally in their space.

The most prominent example of OPL CE collaboration potential here, is in the area of the “open data” or “civic hacking” movement. Vast amounts of government information is available by law to citizens and organizations, but is often in raw and virtually unusable form. The mission statement of one new nonprofit, Open Nebraska (that has foundational ties to Do Space), is to “drive innovation and community engagement all across the state, by making local data and information more accessible to the public<sup>10</sup>.”

- 4) Yet another concurrent development with tremendous CE collaboration potential in Omaha, is the recent opening of the new, \$24 million, 60,000 square-foot Weitz Community Engagement Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (see <http://www.unomaha.edu/community-engagement-center/>). OPL is partnering with UNO and housing three full-time library CE staff there, to network and collaborate with over 20 other nonprofit and community organizations also located there. The organizations have all committed to the same community-engagement goals of improving citizen participation, creating new collaboration opportunities and addressing issues and problem areas.

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<sup>9</sup> Heritage Services is a philanthropic organization comprised of Omaha’s business leaders and has led efforts to build major facilities, such as the city’s downtown convention center, a ball park to host the College World Series and a state-of-the-art performing arts center. The group is providing \$1.7 million to remodel a former “Border’s” bookstore, located at a major city intersection, for the digital library.

<sup>10</sup> Examples of Open Nebraska government-data access and application projects, already in use or in progress include: real-time city bus locations and travel times, all official walking and bike trails, comprehensive listing of all government and quasi-government boards, agencies and organizations; election campaign contributions, all state government contracts and expenditures, all speed limits geo-coded, school enrollment statistics and test scores, all traffic accidents and crimes geo-coded, indexed municipal codes, listing of vacant and abandoned buildings, and many more of interest to individual citizens and community organizations.

**Recommendation:** As with the Digital Library and technology experts cited above, OPL should aggressively explore and develop all potential avenues of community-engagement and collaboration activity with the UNO CE Center, the 20 other CE organizations with offices there and any others involved with programming or similar interests in the community. The UNO Center and facility, designed to accommodate the full-range of community meetings and collaborations, has already established itself as the centralized "physical-infrastructure" nexus of Omaha CE activity, so it seems ideal and logical for OPL to take advantage of this opportunity and location, to provide the equally-critical community-facilitation expertise it now has to offer.

### **Potentially-Negative Barriers or Threats:**

- 1) Despite having been formally institutionalized as a new core-function in the OPL Strategic Plan (2011), as with any new program or initiative, the lack of strong, consistent and continuing administrative, political and financial support are potential barriers or threats to the long-term sustainability and focus of library CE in Omaha.

Recent changes in leadership (the former permanent Executive Director resigned for a new position, having been replaced by two Interim Directors, while a search for a new EO is underway), budgetary pressures and political conflicts over the structure of local governmental control, are all the types of institutional and organizational challenges that could undermine the performance of the library CE function.

**Recommendation:** As part of their planned and regular CE activities and programming, senior-level OPL and CE staff and the Library Facilitators Team itself, must continually introduce, explain, describe, inform, educate and demonstrate what CE is, why it is important and how it is being operationalized in Omaha.

As we have noted in the report, the FIT team successfully introduced CE and library facilitation to the entire staff at "staff days" and through individual presentations, but keeping CE at the forefront of library functions (that is, on par with collections and programs for example) will require regular internal presentations and reports to the already-supportive Library Board of Trustees, to senior administrators and branch managers, as well as through building external support in the community among key individual stakeholders and organizations.

The best way to build such support is by demonstrating through actual CE projects how (and how-well) library CE can assist and serve them, in pursuing their interests and efforts and in achieving their organizational goals.



- 2) During the facilitation trainings, discussions of **barriers imposed by Omaha's existing community culture** arose on several occasions. To provide additional relevant information on this subject to the CE facilitation consultants/trainers, the project evaluators from UNO recommended two studies on the subject of **Omaha's Community Culture**.<sup>11</sup>

Upon review, the facilitation-training consultants and senior library staff felt that such an **in-depth, objective and "alternative" understanding** of the **Omaha context, community-culture** and **dominant narrative**, would be **invaluable** for the FIT teams as they developed and implemented their pilot projects. As a result, the 2014 study was distributed to all trainees and the CORE Team.

**Recommendation:** Whenever and wherever possible, **relevant information about the local context, community culture and narrative should be developed and/or made available** to all CE staff and facilitators, to provide a **better understanding** of the **citizens, organizations and issues** to be addressed via the CE process.

- 3) Another potential barrier that may or will-likely arise, as OPL seeks to assist the community in dealing with **more-difficult and seemingly intractable problems**, is encountering **resistance and/or criticism** from some segments that could be directed at the library. While engaging with the community in such difficult areas can create **long-term civic health**, as noted by the Urban Libraries Council (2011), **communities often do not confront or address** such issues until they reach **a crisis point**.

**Recommendation:** Probably the most important action the library can take to minimize the barrier or threat of "controversy" to CE efforts, is for the Library Board, senior staff and leadership to **anticipate** that this will **likely happen** at some point. In other words, the library needs to **be prepared** to "take the heat" in some instances, simply as a **natural element** of **what needs to be discussed and occur as part of the CE process**, for the **long-term betterment** of all citizens and the community.

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<sup>11</sup> The first is a seminal study on the subject conducted by Patrick McNamara entitled. "*Collaborative Success and Community Culture: Cross-Sectoral Partnerships in Omaha and Portland*" (2007) (See <http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/pubnum/3287859.html?FMT=AI>).

The second is a summary of McNamara's previous research with additional local data and contextual analyses by R.K. Piper (one of the project evaluators and authors of this report) and Theresa Baron-McKeagney (Associate Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Community Services at UNO), entitled "*Examining Community-Culture and Local Narrative to Effectively Address Poverty and Related Social Problems (Society for the Study of Social Problems, Annual Conference, 2014)*". (See Appendix D).

Organizational partners will also likely be aware of and/or have some strategies in mind for dealing with expected "blowback" on particular issues or problems that should be useful. Similarly, reviewing available information on the community context (McNamara (2007) and Piper/McKeagney (2014) in Omaha), should also be useful in overcoming such barriers encountered in developing and implementing productive strategies, plans and projects.

Fundamentally however, the reputation of the library as a neutral place and service provider (ULC, 2011) will allow it and CE staff to bring important issues forward in a safe and unbiased manner, so all opinions and ideas can be safely shared and valued.

- 4) Finally, to better understand the OPL Community Engagement Demonstration Project in all its dimensions, certain critical elements of ALL three reports produced for this project (the final OPL grant report to IMLS, the facilitation and training toolkit created by the library-facilitation consultants and this external evaluation) should be integrated and made available to interested libraries, concerned citizens, organizations and public-policy makers.

**Recommendation:** To better describe the CE model developed in this demonstration project, IMLS and/or other institutions should draw on the most important elements of the three reports cited above and other sources, to produce and publish a formal document on the subject of library community-engagement. This would lay out the rationale for library CE; and then present findings, resources and recommendations on how best to initiate, implement, evaluate and sustain library community-initiatives throughout the U.S. and elsewhere.

## V. APPENDICES

### Appendix A: IMLS Community Engagement Grant Proposal Narrative

#### Abstract



#### Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement

Omaha Public Library is the lead applicant in proposing the Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement project for an IMLS National Leadership Grant in 2012. OPL has partnered with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, College of Public Affairs and Community Services, Center for Public Affairs Research to provide the outcomes development and evaluation components. The project timeframe is two years, beginning on December 1, 2012 and ending on November 30, 2014.

Healthy communities are comprised of engaged citizens. This project addresses the need for Public Libraries to clearly define and expand their role in the community, and to demonstrate new value in a transparent and tangible way. Community engagement as practiced in the public, private, and even non-profit sectors is usually focused around the organization's agenda. Our communities need neutral, trusted institutions with no agenda to facilitate engagement and bring people together to participate in shared learning and help them achieve their goals.

This project addresses the IMLS strategic goal of promoting museums and libraries as strong community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality." It is process oriented, as we intend to discover and codify the best practices of community engagement and create the foundation for the body of these activities to become a discipline specific to libraries.

The intended audiences for this project are the communities we serve: individuals to organizations and agencies, and the community at large. The library is a community-based organization that is seen as a place where ideas and opinions can be freely shared, and is well poised to work in collaboration with community, civic, and business leaders to craft a better system for connecting individuals to each other and to their communities.

Specific project activities include the development of a community asset map as groundwork for engagement efforts that define interest or issue arenas and who is doing what, why, and how, revealing opportunities for collaboration and greater engagement. The design and implementation of multiple pilot projects, progressing in complexity from a relationship/connection orientation through problem solving and

collaboration and eventually into the realm of creativity and innovation will integrate best practices and will build upon successes. Staff will learn just in time, with training, but mostly through doing the work with experts and partners. The project will deliver a set of principles, practices, and tools in the discipline of community engagement including:

- A scalable model for community engagement that is inclusive of ideas, opinion, and feedback from community leaders and library patrons.
- Knowledge, practice, tools, guidelines, and capacity building resources that position the public library as a community anchor organization, facilitating engagement of individuals and organizations to connect with people and find networks, solve problems, and even innovate.
- Methods for designing and measuring outcomes for community engagement, and metrics for determining effectiveness of services and programs that make a difference.

Our communities, and those of other libraries that adapt and scale this model, will benefit by improving the quality of life through a sense of connection and belonging. The big-picture outcome for this project is two-fold. In Omaha, OPL will create a culture of awareness, options, and the choice to connect and become engaged in the community. For the library field this project will produce and disseminate a disciplined practice for library and community engagement.

## **Creating a Collaborative Culture through Community Engagement**

### **Statement of Need**

Healthy communities are comprised of engaged citizens. When individuals connect with others around a shared concern, issue, or crisis, conversations emerge that build trust and lead toward improved outcomes. In a 2010 National League of Cities survey, over 95% of city officials responding reported that engagement of individuals in civic issues helped to build a strong sense of community, created greater trust in government, and led to finding better solutions to problems.

Beyond government issues, the broader concept of "community engagement" has become a priority focus for many. Driven by the increasing evidence of a society that was becoming more isolated and showing greater resistance to civil discourse, community and civic leaders began seeking out ways to engage people in working together towards common purposes.

Public Libraries are ideally situated to serve as community engagement leaders. The intended audience for this project is our entire community, from individuals to organizations and agencies. The library is a community-based organization that is seen as a place where ideas

and opinions can be freely shared. As trusted, neutral institutions, public libraries are well poised to work in collaboration with their community, civic, and business leaders to put in place a better system for connecting individuals to each other, and to their communities.

In their Fall 2011 Leadership Brief, Urban Libraries Council identified 5 key leadership roles for public libraries to play in the arena of community engagement:

- Civic Educator--raising awareness of civics, civic engagement, and civic responsibility.
- Conversation Starter--identifying challenging community issues, creating forums for sharing opinions, and developing action strategies.
- Community Bridge--bringing diverse people-including local government officials-and organizations with different perspectives together to build stronger communities.
- Visionary--leading efforts to develop a broad and inclusive community vision.
- Center for Democracy in Action-walking, talking, thinking, and acting as the place where democracy, civic engagement, and public discourse happens.

In order to successfully step into this role, Libraries must first build the capacity to navigate a landscape of rapid change. To sustain libraries, we need the staff to think and behave in new ways with one another, with library members, and with the community at large. This cultural shift will require a new set of staff competencies that must be developed and cultivated, as well as a shift in organizational priorities to reflect community engagement as a strategic imperative. We are mitigating any risk associated with this new strategic direction by partnering with UNO to incorporate acclaimed knowledge and practices in the field of outcomes, and integrating expert consultation to learn and build capacity through training and doing.

By focusing on building a new skill set, and on developing tools and resources that enhance the library's role as a facilitator and community nexus, the public library can accomplish many critical objectives:

- Individual awareness of community around them.
- Quickly connect new people in the community to others.
- Greater awareness of opportunities to get involved and improve involvement with community.
- Enhance other community services already being provided through the library- senior centers, child day-care, shelters, prison, hospitals, schools, military.
- Provide the means that enable communities to develop shared solutions to local problems.

We are not the first to enter the realm of community engagement; one could argue that libraries have always been about engaging

communities. However, the conventional approach involves an issue or interest in which libraries develop collections and subject expertise and deliver programs to engage its service populations. Traditionally these issues or interests are discovered through environmental scanning or just because enough patrons are asking or talking about them, which often results in an incremental change, which may or not be sustained if other opportunities are not presented to reinforce engagement. Our approach is different: we intend to build a process that embeds community engagement in how we do what we do, always. This innovative approach is process-oriented, and will result in a shift in the mindset of libraries from engagement as an activity to engagement as an outcome.

Our communities, and those of other libraries that adapt or adopt this model, will benefit at the individual level by connecting and belonging, and at the community-wide level in their making a difference in a better quality of life for all.

The primary need that this project will address is to transition the public library from its current role as a supporting player in community engagement to a leadership position in facilitating engagement.

### **Impact**

This proposal will directly address the need for Public Libraries to clearly define and expand their role in the community, and to demonstrate new value in a transparent and tangible way. Community engagement as practiced in the public, private, and even non-profit sectors is usually focused around the organization's agenda, for example consensus on planned development, customer satisfaction and building a brand, or awareness of services and need for financial support, respectively. Our approach is to build on our strengths: public libraries are uniquely positioned to facilitate community engagement as a neutral, trusted institution, with no agenda other than to bring people together to participate in shared learning and help them achieve their goals.

The success of this 2-year project will establish the public library as a community anchor institution, acting as a nexus for public engagement and a core component of community service infrastructure. It will lead to the development of clear and sustainable programs that will position the public library as a leader in its service area.

The following are the key ways this project will have an impact on the profession and on the communities we serve:

- Create processes and solutions that position the library as a valuable partner in community building, community conversation, and community action.
- Build a model for community input that is inclusive of ideas, opinion, and feedback from civic and business leaders, library

patrons, and others to build consensus around a model that works for the whole community served.

- Develop and shape methods for designing and measuring community engagement, and metrics for determining effectiveness of new programs that make a difference.
- Develop and deliver an innovative approach that trains staff to become community facilitators, applying methods of applied improvisation to develop skills and talents that can be used in a variety of settings with an increased awareness in how their activities have an impact and make a difference.
- Increase confidence among staff in leading group discussions and encouraging focused dialog.
- Develop a toolkit of training methods and competencies that will position library staff as facilitation experts, available to better serve their communities.
- Create a scalable model for engagement as well as specific programs that can be used in libraries serving all sizes of communities.

The big-picture outcome for this project is two-fold. In Omaha, we will create a culture of awareness, options, and the choice to connect and become engaged in the community. For the library field we will produce and disseminate a disciplined practice for library and community engagement. We will deliver knowledge, practice, tools, guidelines, and capacity building resources that position the public library as a community anchor organization, facilitating engagement of individuals and organizations to connect with people and find networks, solve problems, and even innovate.

## **Evaluation**

The University of Nebraska at Omaha's Center for Public Affairs Research will oversee a process and impact evaluation of the OPL project. The process evaluation will monitor project activities, which is critical for several reasons. First, program managers need to conduct their activities as effectively as possible. Second, funding agencies want to know what they paid for was undertaken. Third, there is little reason to pay attention to program impact, unless we know that the program was implemented as proposed and designed. Finally, monitoring the project provides an opportunity to document program adjustments and refinements.

CPAR will design and implement training programs for OPL staff that will enable them to monitor programs developed through this grant. The training will include designing strategies that are measurable in terms of process and impact, identifying performance measurements, creating easy tools for data collection and analysis, and program reporting. Led by Jerry Deichert, CPAR's director, this training will occur before the launch of each program activity and will be designed in collaboration with grant project leadership.

The OPL Community Engagement Project relies on the effective development and operation of a collaborative system which brings together library staff and community members and organizations. It is thus imperative that project efforts be tracked and assessed with appropriate adjustments made. The process evaluation specifically will address the 3 pilot projects and will be designed and carried out with this focus in mind.

Key program monitoring questions include:

- Is the project being developed and operated in such a way that it involves all critical organizational and program providers and constituencies? This will include how inclusive and open the network is and participant perceptions of changes as a result of the project.
- Is the project perceived as an effective vehicle for community engagement? Is the program reaching the appropriate population(s), and are its activities and efforts being conducted according to the program design?

To answer these questions, a number of process evaluation activities will be carried out. These include attending/reviewing meetings/reports; documenting processes and relationships; working with Project management to define, collect and analyze data relevant to monitoring concerns and questions; and surveys and/or interviews with project staff and participants.

The impact evaluation component will measure the extent to which the project causes change in the target population(s), and whether the change is in the desired direction. Conducting an impact evaluation requires a well-developed model of the program and its various components and interrelationships. To this end, an initial impact evaluation activity will be the refinement of a Program Logic Model. An additional activity will include the specification of program indicators, data sources, data collection, as well as the development of a database for analysis. Subject to refinement of the Program Logic Model, it is expected that the following types of data will be collected: Satisfaction of project participants; awareness and knowledge of and attitudes concerning the OPL's community engagement activities; and capacity of the library staff to facilitate community engagement activities.

## **Project Design**

### **Goals**

1. Create a comprehensive approach to integrating community engagement (CE) into public library core services.
2. Deliver a progressive success model and methodology for libraries -start small and build upon successes.
3. Build capacity in the community, partners and alliances, and library staff through development of competencies and



proficiencies in communication, facilitation, and collaborative practice.

4. Develop a foundational body of knowledge, practice, tools, and training for development of CE as an integral discipline in libraries.

### ***Planning Process***

The scope and content of this project originates from OPL's Strategic Plan 2011 two core strategies:

Omaha needs a Nexus to create greater impact through community collaboration

OPL needs to extend its Reach and serve even more people in our communities

The strategy model that we developed outlined the process and people aspects of the organization that would deliver the strategic direction. All elements of this project's design and implementation are founded in the strategic plan's initiatives, which entailed engaging thousands over many months in identifying what we should become to ensure Omaha's vibrancy. The strategic plan summary and complete plan are included as supporting documents in this application.

### ***Specifics of Project Implementation***

Our strategies for project design and implementation include utilizing project design and management (PM) practices from the professional service realm:

- Critical path, resource loaded, scheduling and task assignment using PM software.
- Periodic project updates and reconciliation with engagement team leads.
- Accountability to team success embedded in individual's performance assessment processes.
- The primary outcome of our consultant's work will be technology transfer- our community, collaborators and staff will learn by doing the work, supplemented with targeted training.

Our work with U N O has clearly defined roles; OPL will manage the effort and perform program activities while UNO will provide the logic model and processes for outcomes development as well as their evaluation throughout the project and at its closure. UNO is included in the project Core Team, which will meet according to the flow of work and provide project leadership, direction, decision-making and course correction. While UNO recognizes that program evaluation requires objectivity in design, measurement, and reporting, CPAR works carefully to ensure that its process and impact evaluation provide meaningful insights and applications. CPAR intends to employ the same approach in its evaluation of the proposed project, and will work closely with OPL to ensure an effective collaboration in this regard.

In the event the Core Team cannot come to consensus, the Project Director will make a final decision.

## **Activities**

### 1.1 Project Mobilization/Operational framework for the project

- Develop a project Core Team.
- Create knowledgebase critical to collaboration - robust, shared information and document management tools and systems (procured <http://www.communityengagement.us> for this project).
- Connect to other communities of practice on CE in the public, nonprofit and private sectors.
- Draft internal and community oriented communication plans with multiple channels, interactive features, feedback loops, targeted messaging, and use of both push and pull strategies.
- Procure equipment and supplies to support project activities.
- Evaluate opportunities and constraints at each branch for (CE) activities.

### 1.2 Evaluation: Develop Materials for Process Evaluation

- Create evaluation process goals, strategies, content, and structure.

### 1.3 Evaluation: Develop Program Logic Model

- Develop the logic model that will govern outcomes design, measurement and impact evaluation.

### 1.4 Project Kick-off/Core Team project session and project management logistics

- Create definition of community engagement, craft goals and expectations, develop roles/responsibilities, and validate project goals, roadmap, schedule, roles and responsibilities.
- Explore best practices in facilitative communication and collaborative practice.
- Develop Core Team communication preferences and protocols; identify next steps and action items.
- Follow-on with Project Manager and Director to finalize project logistics and management practice.

### 1.5 Community Leadership/Staff Engagement/Paving the way for engagement and collaboration

- Create and further develop relationships with leadership in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; establish the credibility and trust in OPL.
- Explore connections for coordination and resource sharing and opportunities for collaborative work
- Initiate conversations with staff; introduce the project and relate the work to OPL's strategic plan.

## 1.6 Relationship Mapping/Community Assets/Creating context, connection and interrelationships

### *1.6.1 Relationship Mapping Research*

- Develop a definition for community assets and approach and methodology to their identification.
- Design cataloging process and begin implementation of research activities.
- Mine the community asset knowledgebase to identify partners that will strengthen the projects.
- Design and facilitate OPL research and CE activities to identify public, private and not for profit organizations in Omaha.
- Identify each organization's work in specific issue arenas and their relationships to each other.
- Inventory and catalog community assets to inform the development of pilot projects.
- Create a community-asset resource for patrons and community organizations.

### *1.6.2 Evaluation: Develop Baseline Survey*

### *1.6.3 Evaluation: Implement Baseline Follow -up Survey*

### *1.6.4 Relationship Mapping Community Workshops*

- Engage community members, organizations, partners, and strategic alliances on validating and expanding upon the initial community asset research.

## 1.7 Staff Engagement Day/Identifying organizational capacity and readiness

- Facilitate forums and activities during the week of and at an annual staff event (devoted to the project).
- Focus primarily on the broader concepts of CE and build upon strengths.
- Build capacity in facilitative communication and collaborative practice.
- Allow everyone to successfully imagine themselves in the new roles this strategic direction will create.

## 1.8 Connections/Networks Pilot Projects/Identifying meaningful, viable, least complex projects

### *1.8.1 Communication and Facilitation Workshops*

- Deliver workshops using applied improvisation to develop skillsets in communication and facilitation for staff that manage meetings and collaborative processes.
- Identify staff interested in and possessing aptitude toward facilitative skills development; create a Facilitators in Training (FIT) team that will develop skills in doing the work

and teach others (community, collaborators, and staff) through technology transfer (target: 20 people).

#### *1.8.2 Evaluation: Outcomes Design, Measurement and Evaluation Workshop*

- Session facilitated by UNO for OPL staff, potential partners and strategic alliances.

#### *1.8.3 Pilot Project(s) Design*

- Identify up to 10 CE opportunities at the micro (individual to small group) level that build upon existing and emergent organizational and community skillsets; address community needs identified in the OPL strategic plan.
- Designate a pilot project manager and facilitator from FIT team (2 person teams per project).
- Design pilot projects (audience, goals, schedules, participants ) and identify outcomes and evaluation methodologies.

#### *1.8.4 Virtual Engagement Training*

- Deliver an online workshop on methods and tools used to integrate virtual engagement into pilot projects.

#### *1.8.5 Project Implementation I Evaluation*

- Market the opportunities for CE using market segmentation information to develop targeted messaging (CommunityConnect).
- Implement projects and simultaneous evaluation; use peer and consultant coaching and feed.
- Lessons learned and best practices into knowledgebase as foundation for next level pilot projects.

### 1.9 Problem Solving Pilot Projects/Identifying the most viable, next-level complexity projects

#### *1.9.1 FIT Team: Problem Solving and Facilitation*

#### *1.9.2 Pilot Project(s) Design*

#### *1.9.3 Project*

*Implementation I Evaluation* will utilize the same format as in activity 1.8 to include:

- Incorporation of lessons learned and emergent best practices learned/developed to date.
- Skills and collaborative practice development will escalate in complexity to address facilitation of complex analysis, negotiation, decision-making, prioritization, and alignment (consensus) as well as more robust virtual engagement.
- Collaborations will reflect intermediate complexity, and engage organizations and people doing.

- Work at the medium macro level (neighborhood/region) in Omaha's interest and issue arenas.

#### 1.10 Innovation/Creativity Pilot Projects/Identifying the most viable, high-level complexity projects

##### *1.10.1 FIT Team: Innovation and Facilitation*

##### *1.10.2 Pilot Project(s) Design*

##### *1.10.3 Project*

*Implementation I Evaluation* will utilize the same format as in activity 1.9 to include:

- Incorporation of lessons learned and emergent best practices learned /developed to date.
- Skills and collaborative practice development will escalate in complexity to address facilitation of discovery and synthesis, strategic and creative thinking, innovation principles and practice, and use of existing products, processes, and knowledge to create new value.
- Virtual engagement will include the most robust forms of participation widely accessible at that time.
- Collaborations will reflect higher complexity and entail the collaborative engagement of organizations doing work at the macro level (community-wide) in Omaha's interest and issue arenas.

##### *1.10.4 Evaluation: Implement Baseline Follow-up Survey*

#### 1.11 Project Conclusion and Final Evaluation/Finalizing replicable, scalable, and sustainable aspects

- Establish responsibility, accountability, and protocols for continued journaling and content.
- Development - continue to tell the story and share learning at the CE site.
- Finalize evaluation documentation and package evaluation model as a tool.

#### **Project Resources: Personnel, Time, Budget**

##### ***Personnel and Time***

The institutional responsibility for project implementation and management is held by OPL, with Linda Trout, Community Outreach Manager designated as Project Director. OPL has created a Strategic and Business Intelligence Manager position and is currently recruiting talented individuals. This person will be on board prior to grant award and we will dedicate 50% of their time to this project.

Linda has thirty years of experience in libraries and museums, the last fifteen focused in community services, outreach, and engagement. She has the organizational, leadership and facilitative skills to direct this project, which will involve staff at all levels throughout the system. Jody brings a fresh perspective to the library world from her decades in business administration and management in the health and wellness, corporate, arts and cultural realms. Linda and the Strategic and Business Intelligence Manager will facilitate a Core Team of key project staff that includes UNO.

Library staff at all levels will be involved in project activities, to include design, delivery, and evaluation.

These projects are not intended to increase the work load of staff or require additional staff; OPL intends to reallocate its resources (staff time, collection and content development, programming, technologies) to embed community engagement in its core services.

Specific staff assigned time in the project plan includes:

- Amy Mather's administrative role in developing a centralized model for programs and events ensures that this project is library-wide.
- Terry Wingate' role in staff development and metrics dovetails with the training the trainers model and will ensure the dissemination of learning by doing with everyone in the system.
- Jody du Rand, Volunteers and Partners Manager, will ensure that relationships are created and nurtured with both partners and community volunteers to expand the library's ability to engage.
- Emily Getzschman, Marketing and Media Manager, will direct marketing of project activities and information dissemination to the community and library field.

Our partner is UNO's Center for Public Affairs Research. In partnership, we gain their expertise in outcomes design, measurement and impact evaluation. By participating in the project and implementing the evaluation, UNO, through CPAR, will be able to strengthen its outreach to a vital city service. The evaluation developed through this project will be shared by all of us broadly with key stakeholders within the city, state, and nation, along with the broadest spectrum of library organizations. Jerry Deichert, Director of UNO's Center for Public Affairs Research, will lead the evaluation process and impart a wealth of current and emergent practices in outcomes and impact measurement from his almost 40 years in the field. RK Piper, Senior Research Associate, and a fortunate graduate student yet to be selected, will perform the evaluation design and implementation.

Our consultants are experts in strategy and facilitation, both in learning and group collaborations. Cheryl Gould uses innovative training techniques such as applied improvisation and gets exceptionally high levels of engagement. She's trained over 10,000 library staff, mentored over 250 trainers and presenters, and is active in the

field. Sam McBane Mulford facilitated our strategic planning process, and has been working with libraries for almost 20 years, in addition to work in the private and nonprofit sectors. Her background in professional services brings us the ability to learn how to be more effective, even though not motivated by profit, but by creating greater impact with our resources. Sam will help us mobilize the project and integrate the use of project tools and best practices to manage the implementation, resource allocation, scheduling, and cost control of the project.

### ***Additional Resources***

Other resources include the physical library facilities (main and eleven branches), and the facilities of our future partners and strategic alliances that are located throughout Omaha. We are incorporating sophisticated tools and services that will hone OPL's ability to reach more people and organizations, and the use of technologies to facilitate engagement. OPL has already invested in these library services:

- Market segmentation to understand our community's geographic consolidation and distribution of life-stages and lifestyles (and niche interests and groups).
- LibPas from Counting Opinions to create a better and deeper understanding of performance.
- CollectionsHQ for collection access, development, and management.

We have requested grant funding for LibSat, a patron satisfaction management system to integrate patron feedback into our practices as well as a tool for outcomes measurements. We have also requested funding for Smartboard and mobile iPad lab to assist us in delivering interesting and interactive engagement opportunities throughout the community.

### **Communications Plan**

#### ***Reaching libraries and beyond with project deliverables***

Throughout the project, a thorough online journal will be maintained to document the processes and results. This information will serve as a guideline for other libraries interested in replicating the work or using it as a foundation for related future research and programs. Project materials will be made available through a website accessible to library networks and the public:

<http://www.communityengagement.us/>. Further communication with the library community will result through direct communication from the library's executive director, as well as project updates provided to professional library organizations such as the Urban Library Council, American Library Association and Public Library Association.

Conference presentations and articles will result from this work. Appropriate library staff will present the lessons learned in

community engagement collaborations. Library staff will present and prepare documentation on how to replicate key projects established to help meet organizational goals and objectives.

### ***Reaching staff with project deliverables***

Library staff will be engaged throughout the implementation of the project. They will have access to the information being provided to libraries, but will also have internal information shared through the library's Intranet and social media networks. Web-accessible training materials (communication, facilitation, collaborative process, etc.) will be created for OPL staff that can be shared broadly. Project information and practical information with impactful deliverables will be made available through social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter and a library blog in instances where the information is applicable to our general audience and may generate interest or productive conversation that will advance the project.

### **Sustainability**

During its Strategic Plan development in 2011, Omaha Public Library identified its role as a community nexus organization as its primary focus, based on the input and feedback from thousands of community leaders, civic leaders, library users and non-users. The Library Trustees are committed to this vision, and have dedicated resources to begin building the internal capacity to move in this direction.

Because the proposed project is so closely tied with our strategic direction, our priority to build a sustainable model, that can continue beyond the scope of the grant is imperative, and as follows:

- Successful community projects will be promoted throughout the service area, increasing the visibility of the library among new audiences.
- CE Projects will lead to systemic change, moving the library from a passive/responsive role to a dynamic role that facilitates action and solution.
- Success will generate momentum and will capture the interest of the philanthropic, business, civic, and education communities in Omaha, further weaving the library deeper into the fabric of the city.
- The proposed project will build the internal capacity for facilitating community engagement by fostering and nurturing the skills and talents of existing staff through innovative training.
- It builds upon core strengths of expertise and access to the resources and experiences of the library, and can be scaled up



or down to meet the needs of any specific community segment or issue.

- New skills and aptitudes will be added to library job descriptions, and will be sought out when hiring new staff moving forward.
- Specific and practical tool kits will be developed that will enable OPL and any library to replicate the training beyond the grant lifespan.
- Metrics created during the project will be used moving forward to continually monitor and measure the effectiveness of projects.

The evaluation procedures and components are also designed for sustainability. The indicators and collaboration can be sustained long after the funding has expired. Lessons learned, relationships built, resources and new partnerships identified will provide a measurement and tracking system absent in our community currently. It will provide other agencies the same framework as those in this project, thus building community momentum.

The need for the library to serve this role in Omaha came from the community it serves; it is a priority strategic direction as identified by the Executive Director and Library Trustees, and it is clear that the outcomes of this project will continue well beyond the timeline for this grant. While we expect to learn a great deal and modify the processes along the way, the project components that emerge will have a lifespan that extends far beyond 2014.

## **Appendix B: CE Pilot Project Components and Tools**

### **B.1 Asset Mapping Community Workshops Community Conversations 03/14/2013**

#### **Government:**

- *OPL*
- o Gary Wasdin Director
- Connected
- *Douglas County*
- o Marc Kraft 444-7025
- Efficient- taking care of those who fell through the cracks

#### **Political:**

- *Marc Kraft 444-7025*
- o Friends for Marc Kraft
- *Douglas County*
- o Elected officials
- *OPL*
- o Linda Trout Government Political
- Meeting space for political discussion.
- *OTEC*
- o Joe Higgs
- Community Action
- *OPL*
- o Board of Directors
- Stuart Chiltender Board President
- *University of Nebraska at Omaha*
- o Sarah Woods- New Director
- Developing new "Community Engagement" content
- New Community-Engagement Building and Program
- *Open Sky Institute*
- o Renee Fry- Political Advocacy
- *Platte Institute*
- o Jim Vokal- Political Advocacy

#### **Education:**

- *Library*
- o Gary Wasdin
- Information/ Helping People
- *Lozier Foundation*
- o Bob Brown
- *Lauritzen Gardens*
- o Brian Kutsch- Director of Education
- Bring schools in for new experiences.
- Community outreach.
- Connect with families and adults.
- Creating good stewards of the environment.
- *Omaha Children's Museum*
- o Christina Kahler
- Programs

- Community engagement
- Outreach
- Education
- **Douglas County**
  - o ~~Corrections~~-Juvenile Detention
  - o Arts Foundation
  - *OPL Programming*
  - o Amy Mather- Adult Services
  - o Julie Humphrey- Youth Services
  - Early Literacy
  - o Nexus for all types of education/ types of learning
  - *Dell Grimes*
  - *Kiewit Foundation*
  - o Lyn Ziegenbein
  - *Hospitals*
  - *Religious Organizations*
  - *Joslyn Art Museum*
  - o Nancy Round
  - o Art and History Education
  - o Outreach to low income areas
  - o Space for other organizations to meet and teach.
  - *Great Plains African-American Museum*
  - o Patrick James
  - *Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium*
  - o Elizabeth Mulkerrin
  - o Education Programs
  - *Creighton University*
  - o Key Contact: Joyce Davis Bengner
  - o Strengths and Passion
  - o Education
  - Higher Ed
  - GED
  - Student Volunteers of many kinds
  - Health education
  - Tutoring at all levels.
  - Actually at Creighton there are many people in all of these. I could probably steer you to the right place for just about anything- at least a starting place- Eileen Wirth
  - *NAACP*
  - *Urban Lease*
  - *Jazz Arts Center*
  - o Preston Love
- Economic**
  - *Friends of the Public Library*
  - o Vanessa Timberlake- President of the Friends
  - o Fundraising
  - *Lozier Foundation*
  - o Bob Braun

- *Lauritzen Gardens*
- *Douglas County*
  - o Arts funding
  - o *Employment*
- *Benson Plant Rescue*
- *Omaha Public Library*
  - o Amy Mather- Programming
- *Mattress Warehouse (Kraft Furniture)*
  - o Marc Kraft (402) 557-5900
- *Kiewit Foundation*
  - o Lyn Ziegenbein
  - o Economic Development
  - o Neighborhoods
  - o Education
- *Legal Aid of Nebraska*
  - o Dave Pontos
- *Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce*
  - o David Brown
  - o *Economic Development*
- *Creighton University*
  - o College of Business Administration Contact: Dean Tony Hendricksen's office for specific names.
  - o Strengths:
    - Education
    - Research
    - Student involvement
    - Neighborhood outreach in our area
    - Help with entrepreneurship
    -
- *Iowa West Foundation*
  - o John Nelson
  - o Primarily Council Bluffs
- *Empowerment Network*
  - o Vicki Quaites-Ferris
  - o North Omaha Community
- *Hospitals*

#### **Values**

- *Lozier Foundation*
  - o Bob Braun
  - o Domestic Violence
  - o Education
  - o Poverty
  - o Literacy
- *Lauritzen Gardens*
- *United Way*
  - o Karen Brickel-Meyer
- *Douglas County*
  - o Courts

- o Social Services
- o Health Care
- o Aged Care
- o Mental Health
- *Creighton University*
- o Campus Ministry- Center for Service and Justice: Ken Read-Bouley
- o Tons of student volunteer work
- o Project homeless connect
- o St. John's church
- o St. Vincent de Paul Society
- o Emergency help to individual
- o Internships for students
- o It goes off and on. I can be a starting place- Eileen Wirth
- *Omaha Public Library*
- o Linda Trout
- o Jody duRand
- o Outreach
- o Partnerships
- *Joslyn Art Museum*
- o Jack Becker
- o Values of Art
- o History or Art History
- o Restoration
- *Lutheran Family Services*
- o Center for Healthy Families
- *One World Health Center*
- *Community Health Centers*
- *Omaha Symphony*
- o Adam Goos
- o Music programs
- *Shakespeare Festival*
- o Programs with schools
- *Shakespeare on the Green*
- *Opera Omaha- Betsey*
- o Programs
- o Presentations
- *Omaha Community Foundation*
- o Sarah Gilbert
- o Large- Scale Community Survey
- *Hospitals*
- *Religious Organizations*
- *Omaha Community Play House*
- o Lora Kalp
- o Theater
- o Art
- o Culture
- *Douglas County Historical Society*
- o Douglas County History
- o Omaha History

03/15/2013

### **Lack of Comprehensive Vision**

- *Foster Youth*
- o Project Everlast
- *Omaha Public Library*
- *Collective for Youth*
- *UNO*
- *Greater Omaha Young Professionals*
- o Create collective vision and programs for young professionals to be involved in the community.

### **Openness to Innovation**

- *NE Arts Council (NAC)*
- o Value the arts, artists and creativity
- o Commitment to serving Nebraskans
- o Commitment to access and inclusion
- o Committed to supporting K-12 and lifelong learning
- o Serving underserved communities
- o See the arts as a vehicle to break down barriers and catalyst for understanding among groups
- o Also invested in community engagement.
- o Anne Alston- Education and Communities Manager
- o NebraskaArtsCouncil.org
- *Literacy Center*
- o Providing hope and opportunity to adults and families through adult basic education.
- o Strengths:
  - Working with lowest literacy level adult students
  - Strong volunteer support to help us serve expanding programs.
  - All students are welcome
- o *Kirsten Case Primary Contact*
- *Metropolitan Community College (MCC)*
- *Opera Omaha*
- o Arts and culture
- o Music education
- o Dance
- o Theater (acting)
- *Emerging Terrain*
- o Design and art collaborative
- o Using space to create connection and community
- *Writelife*
- o Encourage writers to improve their craft (regardless of their financial/educational background)
- *Omaha Lit Fest*
- o Timothy Schaffert [timothys@cox.net](mailto:timothys@cox.net)
- o Conversation between readers and writers.
- o Promotes the city to people outside the city.
- *Urban Abbey*
- o Non profit
- o Coffee shop and gathering space

- o Partners and supports thru coffee sales different community initiatives
- *UNO*
- *The Rose Children's Theater*
- *Omaha Community Playhouse*
- *Project Interfaith*
- o Interfaith and inter-cultural understanding and respect
- o Critical thinking and respectful conversation skills
- o Creating space where people feel welcomed and valued to be who they are
- o Creative, diverse ways to build relationships and understanding
- *Youth- Completely Kids*
- *Nebraska Center for the Book*
- o Reading promotion
- o Book programs
- o Author programs
- o Letters about literature contest
- o Book discussions
- *Financial Literacy*
- o Julie Kalkowski at Creighton
- *Head Start*
- *Omaha Community Playhouse*
- *Omaha Children's Museum*
- *Children's Hospital*
- *Union for Contemporary Art*
- o Multi use space
- o Community focused
- o North Omaha story community collaborator
- o Bridget Shaw
- *Other Creative Organizations*
- o Malcom X Foundation
- o El Museo Latino
- o Nebraska Writers Collective
- o The Union for Contemporary Arts
- o Kaneko
- o Emerging Terrain

### **Education**

- *Metropolitan Community College*
- *Completely Kids*
- *Avenue Scholars Foundation (ASF)*
- o Offering hope to students in poverty
- o Ensuring careers through "intrusive" support
- o Ken Bird
- *The Kent Bellus Studio*
- o Anne Meysenburg
- o Youth engagement in the community
- o Bridges cultural gaps
- o Works with teenagers
- *Building Bright Futures*

- *Nebraska Library Association*
  - o Literacy support
  - o Adult education
  - o Family support
- *Omaha Public Schools*
  - o Literacy
  - o Education
  - o Students/children
  - o Families
  - o Outreach
  - o Services for children
  - o Resources
- *Friends of the Public Library*
  - o Advocacy
  - o Raises \$ for OPL
  - o Encourage use of libraries
  - o Encourage reading
  - o Our greatest strength is our dedicated volunteers
- *Vision Helpers*
  - o Help low vision persons regain the joy of reading
  - o Provide full products, services for persons with low vision.
  - o Reading helps keep the mind active and extends life, healthy living= diet, exercise, reading
  - o Pat Fischer
- **UNO**
  - o Community based
  - o **Service learning**
  - o Educational
  - o **Community engagement**
  - o Education
  - o **Diversity**

#### **Lack of Resource Coordination**

- *United Way*
  - o Identifying community providers
- *Heart Ministry Center*
  - o Respectful support
- *Health and Human Services*
- *Heartland Family Services*
- *Nebraska Foundation for the Blind and Visually Impaired Children*
- *Nebraska Appleseed*
- *Nebraska Assistive Technology*
  - o [www.at4all.com](http://www.at4all.com)
- *Omaha Community Foundation*
- *Nebraska Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing*
- *Metro Area Continuum of Care*
  - o Warehouse homeless resources
  - o Former YMCA
  - Coordinated department to help with domestic violence
- *OHA*
- *Service Clubs*



- o Rotary
- o Kiwanis
- o Lions
- Black Empowerment Network 360
- *InCommon Community Development*
- o Enjoying, connecting with and serving those often forgotten.
- o Community voice and needs drive programs
- o Park Ave area
- o Christian Grey
- *UNO*
- *Charles Drew Health Center*
- *One World*
- *Department of Veterans Affairs*
- Urban League of Nebraska

#### **Transportation**

- *Modeshift*
- o Advocates for greater choice in transportation and more robust transportation systems
- o Greater Omaha Young Professionals

#### **Perception of Safety**

- *Food bank*
- *Homeless shelters*
- *Heart Ministry Center*
- o Food pantry, health clinics and other direct social services to people in need
- o Do not proselytize
- o Humane society
- o One World Health Center
- Providing access to quality health care
- *The Union for Contemporary Art*

## B.2 Pilot-Project Evaluation Plan/Outcomes and Output Forms

### IMLS Pilot Project Evaluation Plan

#### At the Event

1. Ask each participant to fill out the baseline Community Engagement survey. Paper copies will be provided for each pilot project. Once your events are scheduled, let Terry Wingate know how many copies of the evaluation forms you will need.
2. Please ask participants to fill out the survey before you start your planned activities. You can decide if you want the participants to fill out the survey as a group or have each person fill it out as they arrive for the project. The statement below should be shared with the group –

*OPL has received a grant to create a community engagement model for public libraries. This survey is designed to learn how involved Omaha residents are in community life. We'd appreciate 10 minutes of your time to complete the survey. All responses will be kept confidential.*

3. Encourage the participants to fill out the contact information on the paper survey so you can do the follow-up evaluation 10 to 15 days later. This grid is on the paper surveys that you hand out.

Contact Information
Name:
Address:
Phone Number:
E-Mail Address:
This information will be used to contact you to answer some follow-up questions. Please check the box below for your preferred method.
E-Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Phon <input type="checkbox"/> Best Time to Call Me
_____
Do Not Contact <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Collect the completed surveys. Keep them until you complete the follow-up evaluation.
5. Count the number of attendees at your event.

#### Event Follow-Up

1. Contact each participant via his or her preferred method (phone or e-mail) 10 to 14 days later. A sample e-mail message is just above the Outcomes Table. Feel free to compose your own message for those who wish to be contacted by e-mail.
2. Thank the person for attending your event.
3. Ask the following questions in the Outcomes table below. If the person wants to elaborate on any of the questions, write down the information.

4. Be sure to include the project name, facilitators, and date on each follow-up evaluation form.

### Follow-up E-Mail Message

Thank you for attending the session on [insert date]. We appreciate that you took the time to discuss [insert your topic] with others interested in [insert your topic here]. Please answer the 3 questions below and reply to [insert e-mail address].

1. Did you learn something new at this event? Yes or No
2. Did you meet someone new at this event? Yes or No
3. Would be willing to meet again to discuss this topic? Yes or No

We'd love to hear any thoughts or comments that you have about the event –

We hope to see you again at another community event.

	<b>Outcomes Table</b>	
Project Name	Facilitators	Date
Did you learn something new at this event?	Yes	No
Did you meet someone new at this event?	Yes	No
Would you be willing to meet again to discuss this topic?	Yes	No

5. Complete the Outputs table for your pilot project.

	<b>Outputs Table</b>	
Project Name	Facilitators	Date
Question	Number	Percentage (Questions 2, 4, & 6)
1. How many people were invited?		

2. How many people came to the event?		
3. How many surveys were handed out?		
4. How many surveys were completed?		
5. How many participants were contacted later?		
6. How many participants answered the follow-up questions?		

6. After completing the follow-up evaluation, send the completed baseline surveys and evaluation follow-up sheets to Terry Wingate, Administrative Office, W. Dale Clark Library via interoffice mail.

### B.3 Pilot-Project Invitation/Attendance & Staff Promotions

<b>OPL Invitations Sent Vs. Attendees for Pilot Projects 1, 2, and 3</b>			
<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Number of Invitations Sent</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>	<b>Percentage (%) of Attendees</b>
<b>Pilot Project 1</b>			
Aging In Place	21	9	43%
ESL Providers	20	17	85%
High School Education	40	2	5%
Lone Tree Foods	71	33	46%
Music Education	12	3	25%
Public Transportation and Refugees	7	4	57%
Recycling Nontraditional Materials	27	7	26%
Voter Turnout	28	7	25%
<b>Pilot Project 2</b>			
Building Community, Building Citizenship	20	9	45%
Douglas County Voter Education	20	2	10%
Improving Online Access	35	22	65%
Prisoner Re-Entry	40	24	60%
Senior Connections	57	24	42%
Unemployment in East Omaha	22	14	64%
<b>Pilot Project 3</b>			
Neighborhood Engagement through Health Impact Assessments	45	35	78%
Omaha's Certain <i>Je Ne Sais Quoi</i> Historic Preservation	15	8	53%
Prisoner Reentry -- Family and Friends of Inmates	N/A	9	N/A
Talent Drain (Outmigration of Young Professionals in Omaha)	42	14	33%

Where's the Gap?: Unemployment and Education	48	7	15%
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**Table B.3 FIT Team Members 2013 and 2015**

<b>FIT Team Member</b>	<b>2013 OPL Job</b>	<b>2015 OPL Job</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Michelle Carlson	Library Specialist at SK (Youth Services)		Left OPL in September 2014
Nancy Chmiel	Librarian I at SK (Youth Services)	Librarian I at SL (Youth Services)	
Matt Couch	Librarian I at AB (Adult Services)	Branch Manager at AS	Promoted February 2015
Micki Dietrich	Library Specialist (Programming) at WDC	Community Engagement & Outreach Coordinator (CEC) – Promoted to Librarian I in June 2015	Moved to Community Engagement Center
Joanne Ferguson Cavanaugh	Branch Manager at WB	Branch Manager at WB	
Laurie Hajek-Jones	Senior Clerk at SB	Senior Clerk at SB	
Autumn Hill	Library Specialist at BB (Youth Services)	Library Specialist at BB (Youth Services)	
Suzan Jank	Library Specialist at WC (Adult Services)		Retired April 2015
Megan Klein-Hewett	Senior Clerk at WDC	Librarian I at WDC	Promoted March 2015
Marvel Maring	Branch Manager at AB	Branch Manager at AB	
Amy Mather	Adult Services Manager	Adult Services Manager	
Maggie Rasmussen	Outreach Specialist at WDC	Outreach Specialist (CEC)	Moved to Community Engagement Center
Deirdre Routt	Collection Processing Manager at WDC (Librarian I)	Branch Manager at FB	Promoted February 2014
Melanie Schultz	Library Specialist at FB (Part-Time)	Collection Processing Manager at WDC (Librarian I)	Promoted April 2014

Mark Sorensen	Library Specialist at SL (Adult Services)	Library Specialist at WDC (Business)	
Anna Wilcoxon	Librarian I at WB (Adult Services)	Librarian I at WDC (Business)	

## Appendix C: Outcome Evaluation Instruments and Findings

### C.1 THE OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY SURVEY: SUMMARIES BY RESPONSE TYPE

Table A1. Responses by Response Type

	Number	Percent
Baseline (Base)-online	135	13.7
Baseline (Base)-paper	183	18.6
Conclusion (Concl)-online	163	16.6
Conclusion (Concl)-paper	277	28.2
Pilot Project 1 (PP1)	71	7.2
Pilot Project 2 (PP2)	84	8.5
Pilot Project 3 (PP3)	71	7.2
Total	984	100.0

Table A2. How many years have you lived in the Omaha area?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Less than 1 year	2.2	3.8	1.4	3.3	0.0	6.3	2.9	3.0
1 to 5 years	10.4	8.7	9.4	8.8	17.2	3.8	11.6	9.5
5 to 10 years	14.9	9.8	13.7	5.5	7.8	16.5	11.6	10.4
10 to 15 years	6.0	9.8	7.9	8.1	15.6	6.3	11.6	8.7
15 to 25 years	22.4	14.2	18.0	17.3	20.3	20.3	11.6	17.6
More than 25 years	44.0	53.6	49.6	57.0	39.1	46.8	50.7	50.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	139	272	64	79	69	940

Table A3. Are you registered to vote?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	5.2	8.8	3.1	16.1	10.0	1.2	0.0	8.2
Yes	94.8	91.2	96.9	83.9	90.0	98.8	100.0	91.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	182	161	274	70	84	69	975

Table A4. Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	5.5	4.3	8.1	9.8	7.5	2.4	2.9	6.5
Yes	94.5	95.7	91.9	90.2	92.5	97.6	97.1	93.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	128	164	161	246	67	84	70	920

Table A5. Do you participate in your neighborhood association?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
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No	61.2	65.6	67.9	58.0	56.7	60.2	67.6	62.3
Yes	38.8	34.4	32.1	42.0	43.3	39.8	32.4	37.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	180	159	269	67	83	68	960

Table A6. Do you participate in a faith-based organization?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	50.4	37.4	46.6	33.6	36.8	34.9	42.9	39.8
Yes	49.6	62.6	53.4	66.4	63.2	65.1	57.1	60.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	133	179	161	274	68	83	70	968

Table A7. Have you visited a city park in the past 12 months?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	8.1	6.6	9.3	10.3	12.9	8.3	5.6	8.8
Yes	91.9	93.4	90.7	89.7	87.1	91.7	94.4	91.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	181	161	272	70	84	71	974

Table A8. Have you visited a library in the past 12 months?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	3.7	2.7	4.3	0.4	20.0	16.7	15.5	5.8
Yes	96.3	97.3	95.7	99.6	80.0	83.3	84.5	94.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	182	161	276	70	84	71	979

Table9. Have you visited a community/recreation center in the past 12 months?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	48.9	39.3	49.7	41.3	34.8	34.5	33.8	41.8
Yes	51.1	60.7	50.3	58.7	65.2	65.5	66.2	58.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	161	271	69	84	71	974

Table A10. Have you participated in a neighborhood event in the past 12 months?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	41.5	39.3	44.4	39.6	36.8	38.6	30.0	39.6
Yes	58.5	60.7	55.6	60.4	63.2	61.4	70.0	60.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	160	268	68	83	70	967

Table A11. Have you participated in a community event in the past 12 months?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	19.3	26.7	20.6	24.1	11.8	8.4	14.1	20.4
Yes	80.7	73.3	79.4	75.9	88.2	91.6	85.9	79.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	180	160	270	68	83	71	967

Table A12. Have you volunteered time to a community organization in the past 12 months?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	34.3	43.1	37.9	41.5	20.3	17.9	30.0	35.8
Yes	65.7	56.9	62.1	58.5	79.7	82.1	70.0	64.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	181	161	270	69	84	70	969

Table A13. Have you contributed money to a community organization in the past 12 months?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	31.3	39.8	30.0	39.9	19.1	14.3	31.0	32.7
Yes	68.7	60.2	70.0	60.1	80.9	85.7	69.0	67.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	181	160	271	68	84	71	969

Table A14. Do you currently serve as a volunteer anywhere (i.e., church, community service organization, senior citizens center, hospital, etc.)?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	41.0	40.4	30.6	39.3	24.3	29.8	28.2	35.6
Yes	59.0	59.6	69.4	60.7	75.7	70.2	71.8	64.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	178	160	272	70	84	71	969

Table A15. Have you collaborated or partnered with someone in your community to solve a problem?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	74.4	69.7	76.4	68.5	38.2	38.6	35.3	63.8
Yes	25.6	30.3	23.6	31.5	61.8	61.4	64.7	36.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	133	175	161	267	68	83	68	955

Table A16. Do you spend time with people who speak a different language than yourself?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	48.9	53.6	53.4	50.4	26.5	39.8	38.6	47.8
Yes	51.1	46.4	46.6	49.6	73.5	60.2	61.4	52.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	161	268	68	83	70	968

Table A17. How much time do you spend with people who speak a different language than yourself?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Almost every day	29.0	32.9	23.6	31.6	29.6	47.5	22.9	31.0
Once or twice a week	17.4	21.2	13.5	20.9	22.2	8.2	18.8	17.9
Several times a month	26.1	12.9	13.5	12.7	14.8	13.1	14.6	14.9
About once a month	10.1	18.8	7.9	7.0	9.3	11.5	12.5	10.5
Less than once a month	1.4	3.5	9.0	4.4	5.6	3.3	6.3	4.8
Several times a year	8.7	5.9	13.5	12.7	11.1	4.9	14.6	10.5
Once a year or less	7.2	4.7	19.1	10.8	7.4	11.5	10.4	10.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	69	85	89	158	54	61	48	564

Table A18. Do you spend time with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	25.2	21.3	26.1	19.4	10.3	12.2	13.0	20.0
Yes	74.8	78.7	73.9	80.6	89.7	87.8	87.0	80.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	157	268	68	82	69	962

Table A19. How much time do you spend with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Almost every day	35.7	41.7	43.4	40.4	47.5	66.2	51.6	44.4
Once or twice a week	19.4	23.6	16.4	21.9	13.1	14.3	16.1	19.2
Several times a month	26.5	13.2	16.4	13.6	13.1	7.8	11.3	14.8
About once a month	8.2	10.4	3.3	9.2	9.8	1.3	8.1	7.6
Less than once a month	3.1	2.1	4.1	4.8	3.3	1.3	3.2	3.4
Several times a year	5.1	8.3	10.7	4.8	11.5	5.2	8.1	7.2
Once a year or less	2.0	0.7	5.7	5.3	1.6	3.9	1.6	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	98	144	122	228	61	77	62	792

Table A20. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--The Omaha community in general?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Not Connected	3.0	7.7	5.0	9.0	3.1	1.2	5.8	5.9
Slightly Connected	24.6	24.0	19.9	19.9	23.1	18.5	8.7	20.6
Moderately Connected	43.3	33.9	46.6	37.2	38.5	28.4	40.6	38.6
Very Connected	21.6	26.8	20.5	24.4	29.2	38.3	33.3	26.0
Extremely Connected	7.5	7.7	8.1	9.4	6.2	13.6	11.6	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	266	65	81	69	959

Table A21. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Your neighborhood?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Not Connected	14.2	11.5	9.3	9.3	11.3	8.5	10.0	10.5
Slightly Connected	23.1	19.1	21.7	23.5	19.4	23.2	21.4	21.9
Moderately Connected	35.8	34.4	35.4	27.2	30.6	26.8	31.4	31.7
Very Connected	17.9	26.2	24.8	26.5	30.6	28.0	20.0	24.9
Extremely Connected	9.0	8.7	8.7	13.4	8.1	13.4	17.1	11.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	268	62	82	70	960

Table A22. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Businesses?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Not Connected	11.9	19.7	13.0	17.7	6.5	3.7	4.3	13.6
Slightly Connected	33.6	19.1	28.0	21.9	21.0	22.0	20.0	23.8
Moderately Connected	33.6	36.6	38.5	34.2	30.6	34.1	41.4	35.6
Very Connected	17.2	20.8	16.8	19.2	29.0	32.9	25.7	21.1
Extremely Connected	3.7	3.8	3.7	6.9	12.9	7.3	8.6	5.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	260	62	82	70	952

Table A23. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Arts community?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Not Connected	20.1	24.6	18.0	26.1	20.6	23.2	17.4	22.4
Slightly Connected	27.6	27.9	16.8	24.2	28.6	25.6	26.1	24.7
Moderately Connected	22.4	20.2	39.8	23.5	34.9	29.3	34.8	27.5
Very Connected	22.4	19.1	18.0	16.3	9.5	19.5	15.9	17.8
Extremely Connected	7.5	8.2	7.5	9.8	6.3	2.4	5.8	7.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	264	63	82	69	956

Table A24. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Education community?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Not Connected	17.9	16.4	15.6	15.2	11.3	8.5	11.4	14.8
Slightly Connected	22.4	24.6	18.8	19.8	29.0	19.5	22.9	21.7
Moderately Connected	27.6	25.1	32.5	26.6	30.6	25.6	27.1	27.7
Very Connected	23.1	22.4	20.0	22.1	19.4	28.0	28.6	22.7
Extremely Connected	9.0	11.5	13.1	16.3	9.7	18.3	10.0	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	160	263	62	82	70	954

Table A25. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha—Government?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Not Connected	23.1	31.7	21.3	27.3	15.6	7.3	7.1	22.6
Slightly Connected	29.9	30.6	38.1	29.9	35.9	28.0	8.6	30.1
Moderately Connected	34.3	25.7	28.1	26.5	31.3	37.8	30.0	29.3
Very Connected	9.7	8.2	6.9	9.8	10.9	15.9	32.9	11.3
Extremely Connected	3.0	3.8	5.6	6.4	6.3	11.0	21.4	6.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	160	264	64	82	70	957

Table A26. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Health and wellness community?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Not Connected	19.4	17.5	14.3	15.2	11.1	9.8	10.0	14.9
Slightly Connected	23.9	26.2	26.1	20.1	27.0	22.0	28.6	24.0
Moderately Connected	29.1	29.0	39.8	30.3	38.1	28.0	34.3	32.1
Very Connected	17.9	19.7	13.7	22.7	14.3	31.7	17.1	19.7
Extremely Connected	9.7	7.7	6.2	11.7	9.5	8.5	10.0	9.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	264	63	82	70	957

Table A27. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Volunteer and charity community?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
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Not Connected	14.2	15.8	11.9	13.5	7.9	1.2	10.0	12.1
Slightly Connected	26.9	24.0	14.5	20.2	20.6	19.5	22.9	21.1
Moderately Connected	25.4	25.7	36.5	26.2	34.9	32.9	18.6	28.3
Very Connected	24.6	19.7	22.0	24.0	19.0	31.7	24.3	23.3
Extremely Connected	9.0	14.8	15.1	16.1	17.5	14.6	24.3	15.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	159	267	63	82	70	958

Table A28. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area—Thriving.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	2.2	3.3	3.8	4.6	0.0	1.3	1.4	3.0
Disagree	11.2	6.6	7.5	8.0	4.7	6.3	8.7	7.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.6	18.6	18.8	23.3	23.4	16.3	20.3	20.6
Agree	56.7	55.7	52.5	51.5	57.8	62.5	50.7	54.5
Strongly Agree	8.2	15.8	17.5	12.6	14.1	13.8	18.8	14.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	160	262	64	80	69	952

Table A29. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area—Safe.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	6.7	5.5	6.9	6.8	1.6	0.0	1.4	5.2
Disagree	18.7	22.4	17.5	25.0	15.6	16.3	5.8	19.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	25.4	24.0	27.5	29.5	37.5	41.3	29.0	29.0
Agree	47.8	42.6	43.8	33.7	43.8	40.0	58.0	42.0
Strongly Agree	1.5	5.5	4.4	4.9	1.6	2.5	5.8	4.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	160	264	64	80	69	954

Table A30. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area—Stable.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	3.7	3.3	5.0	3.8	1.6	0.0	2.9	3.4
Disagree	10.4	9.3	8.8	11.0	3.1	7.5	7.2	9.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.4	25.1	20.1	26.9	23.4	16.3	17.4	23.0
Agree	56.7	50.3	53.5	51.5	64.1	70.0	53.6	54.9
Strongly Agree	6.7	12.0	12.6	6.8	7.8	6.3	18.8	9.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	159	264	64	80	69	953

Table A31. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area—Vulnerable.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	6.0	10.9	5.0	5.4	4.8	3.8	0.0	5.9
Disagree	31.3	31.7	38.8	25.5	36.5	24.1	39.1	31.4

Neither Agree nor Disagree	34.3	31.1	28.1	37.1	33.3	40.5	30.4	33.6
Agree	27.6	21.9	25.0	23.9	23.8	26.6	29.0	24.8
Strongly Agree	0.7	4.4	3.1	8.1	1.6	5.1	1.4	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	160	259	63	79	69	947

Table A32. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--In Crisis.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	20.9	19.7	22.9	20.0	25.8	20.3	10.1	20.2
Disagree	38.8	39.9	35.7	25.8	37.1	29.1	50.7	34.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.4	20.2	24.2	29.6	24.2	34.2	27.5	25.7
Agree	16.4	15.8	12.7	14.2	11.3	12.7	10.1	14.0
Strongly Agree	1.5	4.4	4.5	10.4	1.6	3.8	1.4	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	157	260	62	79	69	944

Table A33. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live—Thriving.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	3.7	6.0	4.3	7.3	1.8	1.3	2.9	4.9
Disagree	12.7	13.1	11.2	11.1	12.5	16.5	1.5	11.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	26.9	19.7	21.7	25.3	25.0	21.5	17.6	22.9
Agree	45.5	42.1	41.0	41.8	50.0	41.8	54.4	43.6
Strongly Agree	11.2	19.1	21.7	14.6	10.7	19.0	23.5	17.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	261	56	79	68	942

Table A34. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live—Safe.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	5.2	4.9	3.1	6.9	0.0	1.3	1.5	4.4
Disagree	16.4	16.4	8.7	12.6	12.7	10.1	2.9	12.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12.7	19.7	16.8	22.6	18.2	17.7	11.8	18.2
Agree	53.0	44.3	55.9	42.1	52.7	51.9	58.8	49.1
Strongly Agree	12.7	14.8	15.5	15.7	16.4	19.0	25.0	16.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	261	55	79	68	941

Table A35. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live—Stable.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	3.7	4.9	1.9	6.4	0.0	1.3	1.5	3.8
Disagree	8.2	10.4	9.3	7.6	3.6	17.7	2.9	8.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23.9	21.9	15.5	22.0	25.0	8.9	13.2	19.6
Agree	52.2	43.7	54.7	50.0	58.9	54.4	55.9	51.2
Strongly Agree	11.9	19.1	18.6	14.0	12.5	17.7	26.5	16.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	264	56	79	68	945

Table A36. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live—Vulnerable.

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	13.4	18.0	18.0	13.9	12.5	12.8	22.7	15.8
Disagree	38.1	33.3	37.9	24.7	39.3	34.6	43.9	33.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.4	23.0	22.4	32.8	35.7	26.9	21.2	26.5
Agree	22.4	20.8	16.1	20.5	12.5	24.4	12.1	19.3
Strongly Agree	3.7	4.9	5.6	8.1	0.0	1.3	0.0	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	259	56	78	66	937



Table A37. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--  
In Crisis.

	Base- online	Base- paper	Concl- online	Concl- paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Strongly Disagree	31.3	33.3	37.9	30.0	30.4	34.6	43.9	33.6
Disagree	32.8	31.7	36.6	26.2	37.5	32.1	36.4	31.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	26.1	21.9	17.4	26.2	28.6	24.4	16.7	23.1
Agree	8.2	8.7	4.3	11.9	3.6	7.7	3.0	8.0
Strongly Agree	1.5	4.4	3.7	5.8	0.0	1.3	0.0	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	161	260	56	78	66	938

Table A38. Please select the bracket that best reflects your age?

	Base- online	Base- paper	Concl- online	Concl- paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
19-24	6.7	10.4	7.7	4.2	3.0	4.8	1.4	6.0
25-44	43.0	27.3	39.2	29.1	50.0	33.7	49.3	35.6
45-64	45.9	37.2	44.1	38.5	42.4	51.8	33.3	41.2
65 or older	4.4	25.1	9.1	28.3	4.5	9.6	15.9	17.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	143	265	66	83	69	944

Table A39. Are you of Hispanic or Latino background?

	Base- online	Base- paper	Concl- online	Concl- paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	95.5	95.1	97.7	95.4	96.9	98.8	95.5	96.1
Yes	4.5	4.9	2.3	4.6	3.1	1.3	4.5	3.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	134	183	132	259	64	80	66	918

Table A40. Which of the following best describes your primary race?

	Base- online	Base- paper	Concl- online	Concl- paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.6
Asian	0.0	0.5	0.0	3.4	0.0	2.5	0.0	1.3
Black or African American	5.2	12.6	4.3	18.0	4.8	17.5	7.7	11.2
White or Caucasian	88.9	71.6	94.4	69.3	90.5	78.8	87.7	80.3
Two or more races/Multi- cultural	3.0	9.3	0.6	5.0	3.2	1.3	3.1	4.2
Some other race	3.0	5.5	0.6	2.7	1.6	0.0	0.0	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	161	261	63	80	65	948

Table A41. Minority (Calculated from the previous two tables)

	Base- online	Base- paper	Concl- online	Concl- paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
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White, non-Hispanic/Latino	85.9	71.0	93.2	67.8	87.5	77.5	84.8	78.6
Minority (Hispanic/Latino or non-White)	14.1	29.0	6.8	32.2	12.5	22.5	15.2	21.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	161	261	64	80	66	950

Table A42. Do you own or rent your current residence?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Own or buying	71.1	66.7	74.5	62.1	70.3	78.8	78.5	69.4
Rent	25.2	28.4	24.2	31.8	28.1	18.8	21.5	26.9
Other	3.7	4.9	1.3	6.1	1.6	2.5	0.0	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	135	183	157	261	64	80	65	945

Table A43. What is your marital status?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Married	56.1	48.6	64.3	46.4	61.9	58.8	76.9	55.4
Widowed	2.3	6.6	2.5	10.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	5.0
Divorced/Separated	14.4	19.1	9.6	16.9	11.1	12.5	4.6	14.1
Never married	22.0	21.3	20.4	21.8	15.9	22.5	15.4	20.7
Living with a partner	5.3	4.4	3.2	5.0	11.1	6.3	0.0	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	132	183	157	261	63	80	65	941

Table A44. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Less than a High school Diploma	3.1	2.2	1.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
High school Graduate or GED	4.7	9.9	2.6	13.1	1.6	1.3	1.5	6.9
Some College but no degree or certificate	12.4	17.6	10.3	21.5	14.1	8.8	4.5	14.8
Associate's degree	6.2	8.2	3.2	10.0	1.6	7.5	1.5	6.6
Bachelor's degree	31.0	35.7	40.4	29.6	45.3	40.0	36.4	35.2
Post Graduate Degree	42.6	26.4	42.3	20.8	37.5	42.5	56.1	33.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	129	182	156	260	64	80	66	937

Table A45. What was your total household income last year from all sources in the following categories?

	Base-online	Base-paper	Concl-online	Concl-paper	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
Less than \$15,000	8.0	15.7	6.9	19.9	4.9	0.0	3.2	11.4
\$15,000 but less than \$25,000	7.1	10.2	7.6	17.8	4.9	9.3	3.2	10.6
\$25,000 but less than \$50,000	24.1	23.5	25.7	21.6	27.9	21.3	14.5	22.9
\$50,000 but less than \$75,000	17.9	19.3	20.8	15.4	23.0	20.0	21.0	18.7
\$75,000 but less than \$100,000	19.6	13.9	17.4	11.2	21.3	18.7	27.4	16.4
\$100,000 or more	23.2	17.5	21.5	14.1	18.0	30.7	30.6	20.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	112	166	144	241	61	75	62	861

The following questions were asked only of the participant of the three pilot projects.

Table A45. Did you learn something new at this event?

	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	5.1	5.9	15.0	7.3
Yes	94.9	94.1	85.0	92.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	39	51	20	110

Table A46. Did you meet someone new at this event?

	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	0.0	7.8	10.0	5.4
Yes	100.0	92.2	90.0	94.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	40	51	20	111

Table A47. Would be willing to meet again to discuss this topic?

	PP1	PP2	PP3	Total
No	5.1	6.0	5.3	5.6
Yes	94.9	94.0	94.7	94.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	39	50	19	108

## C.2 THE OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY SURVEY: SUMMARIES FOR BASELINE AND CONCLUDING SURVEYS

Table B1. Responses by Response Type

	Number
Baseline	318
Online	135
Paper	183
Conclusion	440
Online	163
Paper	277
Total	758

Table B2. How many years have you lived in the Omaha area?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Less than 1 year	3.2	2.7	2.9
1 to 5 years	9.5	9.0	9.2
5 to 10 years	12.0	8.3	9.9
10 to 15 years	8.2	8.0	8.1
15 to 25 years	17.7	17.5	17.6

More than 25 years	49.5	54.5	52.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	411	728

Table B3. Are you registered to vote?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	7.3	11.3	9.6
Yes	92.7	88.7	90.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	435	752

Table B4. Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	4.8	9.1	7.3
Yes	95.2	90.9	92.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	292	407	699

Table B5. Do you participate in your neighborhood association?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	63.7	61.7	62.5
Yes	36.3	38.3	37.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	314	428	742

Table B6. Do you participate in a faith-based organization?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	42.9	38.4	40.3
Yes	57.1	61.6	59.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	312	435	747

Table B7. Have you visited a city park in the past 12 months

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	7.3	9.9	8.8
Yes	92.7	90.1	91.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	316	433	749

Table B8. Have you visited a library in the past 12 months?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	3.2	1.8	2.4

Yes	96.8	98.2	97.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	437	754

Table B9. Have you visited a community/recreation center in the past 12 months?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	43.4	44.4	44.0
Yes	56.6	55.6	56.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	432	750

Table B10. Have you participated in a neighborhood event in the past 12 months?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	40.3	41.4	40.9
Yes	59.7	58.6	59.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	428	746

Table B11. Have you participated in a community event in the past 12 months?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	23.5	22.8	23.1
Yes	76.5	77.2	76.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	315	430	745

Table B12. Have you volunteered time to a community organization in the past 12 months?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	39.4	40.1	39.8
Yes	60.6	59.9	60.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	315	431	746

Table B13. Have you contributed money to a community organization in the past 12 months?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	36.2	36.2	36.2
Yes	63.8	63.8	63.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	315	431	746

Table B14. Do you currently serve as a volunteer anywhere (i.e., church, community service organization, senior citizens center, hospital, etc.)

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	40.7	36.1	38.0
Yes	59.3	63.9	62.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	312	432	744

Table B15. Have you collaborated or partnered with someone in your community to solve a problem?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
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No	71.8	71.5	71.6
Yes	28.2	28.5	28.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	308	428	736

Table B16. Do you spend time with people who speak a different language than yourself?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	51.6	51.5	51.5
Yes	48.4	48.5	48.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	429	747

Table B17. How much time do you spend with people who speak a different language than yourself?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Almost every day	31.2	28.7	29.7
Once or twice a week	19.5	18.2	18.7
Several times a month	18.8	13.0	15.2
About once a month	14.9	7.3	10.2
Less than once a month	2.6	6.1	4.7
Several times a year	7.1	13.0	10.7
Once a year or less	5.8	13.8	10.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	154	247	401

Table B18. Do you spend time with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	23.0	21.9	22.3
Yes	77.0	78.1	77.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	425	743



Table B19. How much time do you spend with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Almost every day	39.3	41.4	40.5
Once or twice a week	21.9	20.0	20.8
Several times a month	18.6	14.6	16.2
About once a month	9.5	7.1	8.1
Less than once a month	2.5	4.6	3.7
Several times a year	7.0	6.9	6.9
Once a year or less	1.2	5.4	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	242	350	592

Table B20. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--The Omaha community in general

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	5.7	7.5	6.7
Slightly Connected	24.3	19.9	21.8
Moderately Connected	37.9	40.7	39.5
Very Connected	24.6	23.0	23.7
Extremely Connected	7.6	8.9	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	427	744

Table B21. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Your neighborhood

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	12.6	9.3	10.7
Slightly Connected	20.8	22.8	22.0
Moderately Connected	35.0	30.3	32.3
Very Connected	22.7	25.9	24.5
Extremely Connected	8.8	11.7	10.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	429	746

Table B22. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Businesses

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	16.4	15.9	16.1
Slightly Connected	25.2	24.2	24.7
Moderately Connected	35.3	35.9	35.6
Very Connected	19.2	18.3	18.7
Extremely Connected	3.8	5.7	4.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	421	738

Table B23. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Arts community

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	22.7	23.1	22.9
Slightly Connected	27.8	21.4	24.1
Moderately Connected	21.1	29.6	26.0
Very Connected	20.5	16.9	18.5
Extremely Connected	7.9	8.9	8.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	425	742

Table B24. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Education community

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	17.0	15.4	16.1
Slightly Connected	23.7	19.4	21.2
Moderately Connected	26.2	28.8	27.7
Very Connected	22.7	21.3	21.9
Extremely Connected	10.4	15.1	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	423	740

Table B25. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Government

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	28.1	25.0	26.3
Slightly Connected	30.3	33.0	31.8
Moderately Connected	29.3	27.1	28.1
Very Connected	8.8	8.7	8.8
Extremely Connected	3.5	6.1	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	424	741

Table B26. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Health and wellness community

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	18.3	14.8	16.3
Slightly Connected	25.2	22.4	23.6
Moderately Connected	29.0	33.9	31.8
Very Connected	18.9	19.3	19.1
Extremely Connected	8.5	9.6	9.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	425	742

Table B27. How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Volunteer and charity community

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Not Connected	15.1	12.9	13.9
Slightly Connected	25.2	18.1	21.1
Moderately Connected	25.6	30.0	28.1
Very Connected	21.8	23.2	22.6
Extremely Connected	12.3	15.7	14.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	426	743

Table B28. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--  
Thriving

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	2.8	4.3	3.7
Disagree	8.5	7.8	8.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19.9	21.6	20.8
Agree	56.2	51.9	53.7
Strongly Agree	12.6	14.5	13.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	422	739

Table B29. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--  
Safe

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	6.0	6.8	6.5
Disagree	20.8	22.2	21.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24.6	28.8	27.0
Agree	44.8	37.5	40.6
Strongly Agree	3.8	4.7	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	424	741

Table B30. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--  
Stable

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	3.5	4.3	3.9
Disagree	9.8	10.2	10.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24.0	24.3	24.2
Agree	53.0	52.2	52.6
Strongly Agree	9.8	9.0	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	423	740

Table B31. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--  
Vulnerable

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	8.8	5.3	6.8
Disagree	31.5	30.5	31.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32.5	33.7	33.2
Agree	24.3	24.3	24.3
Strongly Agree	2.8	6.2	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	419	736

Table B32. Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--  
In Crisis

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	20.2	21.1	20.7
Disagree	39.4	29.5	33.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.1	27.6	24.8
Agree	16.1	13.7	14.7
Strongly Agree	3.2	8.2	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	417	734

Table B33. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Thriving

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	5.0	6.2	5.7
Disagree	12.9	11.1	11.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.7	23.9	23.4
Agree	43.5	41.5	42.4
Strongly Agree	15.8	17.3	16.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	422	739

Table B34. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Safe

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	5.0	5.5	5.3
Disagree	16.4	11.1	13.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.7	20.4	18.8
Agree	47.9	47.4	47.6
Strongly Agree	13.9	15.6	14.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	422	739

Table B35. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Stable

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	4.4	4.7	4.6
Disagree	9.5	8.2	8.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.7	19.5	20.9
Agree	47.3	51.8	49.9
Strongly Agree	16.1	15.8	15.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	425	742

Table B36. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Vulnerable

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	16.1	15.5	15.7
Disagree	35.3	29.8	32.2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.7	28.8	26.2
Agree	21.5	18.8	19.9
Strongly Agree	4.4	7.1	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	420	737

Table B37. Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--In Crisis

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Strongly Disagree	32.5	33.0	32.8
Disagree	32.2	30.2	31.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23.7	22.8	23.2
Agree	8.5	9.0	8.8
Strongly Agree	3.2	5.0	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	421	738

Table B38. Please select the bracket that best reflects your age:

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
19-24	8.8	5.4	6.9
25-44	34.0	32.6	33.2
45-64	40.9	40.4	40.6
65 or older	16.4	21.6	19.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	408	726

Table B39. Are you of Hispanic or Latino background?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
No	95.3	96.2	95.8
Yes	4.7	3.8	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	317	391	708

Table B40. Which of the following best describes your primary race?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3	0.9	0.7
Asian	0.3	2.1	1.4
Black or African American	9.4	12.8	11.4
White or Caucasian	78.9	78.9	78.9
Two or more races/Multi-cultural	6.6	3.3	4.7
Some other race	4.4	1.9	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	422	740

Table B41. Minority

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
White, non-Hispanic/Latino	77.4	77.5	77.4
Minority	22.6	22.5	22.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	422	740

Table B42. Do you own or rent your current residence?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Own or buying	68.6	66.7	67.5
Rent	27.0	28.9	28.1
Other	4.4	4.3	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	318	418	736

Table B43. What is your marital status?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Married	51.7	53.1	52.5
Widowed	4.8	7.2	6.1
Divorced/Separated	17.1	14.1	15.4
Never married	21.6	21.3	21.4
Living with a partner	4.8	4.3	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	315	418	733

Table B44. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Less than a High school Diploma	2.6	3.6	3.2
High school Graduate or GED	7.7	9.1	8.5
Some College but no degree or certificate	15.4	17.3	16.5
Associate's degree	7.4	7.5	7.4
Bachelor's degree	33.8	33.7	33.7
Post Graduate Degree	33.1	28.8	30.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	311	416	727

Table B45. What was your total household income last year from all sources in the following categories?

	Baseline	Conclusion	Total
Less than \$15,000	12.6	15.1	14.0
\$15,000 but less than \$25,000	9.0	14.0	11.9
\$25,000 but less than \$50,000	23.7	23.1	23.4
\$50,000 but less than \$75,000	18.7	17.4	17.9
\$75,000 but less than \$100,000	16.2	13.5	14.6
\$100,000 or more	19.8	16.9	18.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	278	385	663



## C.3 THE OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY SURVEY: SURVEY RESPONSES BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### Survey Responses by Age and Race/Ethnicity

Question	Response	Age				Race/Ethnicity			
		45 or older	Under 45	t	Sig.	Minority	Non-minority	t	Sig.
How many years have you lived in the Omaha area?	% 25 years or more	70.4%	26.5%	12.626	***	50.3%	53.2%	0.640	-
Are you registered to vote?	% Yes	94.7%	85.8%	4.175	***	78.0%	93.9%	6.212	***
Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election?	% Yes	95.4%	89.2%	3.117	**	85.6%	94.5%	3.621	***
Do you participate in your neighborhood association?	% Yes	44.4%	26.8%	4.819	***	32.5%	38.5%	1.402	-
Do you participate in a faith-based organization?	% Yes	65.3%	52.4%	3.465	***	62.4%	58.7%	0.867	-
Have you visited a city park in the past 12 months	% Yes	89.6%	93.8%	-1.963	*	90.9%	91.2%	0.114	-
Have you visited a library in the past 12 months?	% Yes	98.6%	96.9%	1.594		97.6%	97.5%	0.042	-
Have you visited a community/recreation center in the past 12 months?	% Yes	57.1%	54.1%	0.779		64.2%	53.6%	2.431	*
Have you participated in a neighborhood event in the past 12 months?	% Yes	62.5%	55.5%	1.881		59.5%	58.4%	0.258	-
Have you participated in a community event in the past 12 months?	% Yes	77.6%	76.4%	0.385		68.7%	79.6%	2.962	**
Have you volunteered time to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes	61.7%	57.6%	1.099		57.9%	60.7%	0.631	-
Have you contributed money to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes	67.3%	59.1%	2.243	*	58.2%	65.6%	1.750	-
Do you currently serve as a volunteer anywhere (i.e., church, community service organization, senior citizens center, hospital, etc.)	% Yes	65.4%	56.6%	2.390	*	59.0%	63.0%	0.928	-
Have you collaborated or partnered with someone in your community to solve a problem?	% Yes	32.7%	23.2%	2.763	**	38.5%	25.3%	3.312	***
Do you spend time with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% Yes	44.5%	54.3%	-2.582	*	58.4%	45.6%	2.921	**
How much time do you spend with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% at least once a week	45.5%	51.1%	-1.098		60.9%	43.5%	3.133	**
Do you spend time with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% Yes	74.8%	82.8%	-2.544	*	86.7%	75.3%	3.119	**
How much time do you spend with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% at least once a week	59.9%	63.4%	-0.845		73.5%	57.1%	3.552	***

**Table C1. Survey Responses by Age and Race/Ethnicity (Continued)**

Question	Response	Age				Race/Ethnicity			
		45 or older	Under 45	t	Sig.	Minority	Non-minority	t	Sig.

How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--The Omaha community in general	Mean <sup>1</sup>	3.07	3.02	0.630		2.93	3.09	1.849 <sup>-</sup>	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Your neighborhood	Mean <sup>1</sup>	3.12	2.85	3.031	**	2.87	3.06	1.926 <sup>-</sup>	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Businesses	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.77	2.63	1.615		2.59	2.75	1.612 <sup>-</sup>	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Arts community	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.70	2.58	1.272		2.55	2.69	1.293 <sup>-</sup>	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Education community	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.91	2.98	-0.694		2.91	2.95	0.353 <sup>-</sup>	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Government	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.38	2.27	1.281		2.24	2.37	1.369 <sup>-</sup>	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Health and wellness community	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.92	2.66	2.904	**	2.83	2.81	0.160	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Volunteer and charity community	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.08	2.94	1.497		2.97	3.04	0.673 <sup>-</sup>	
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Thriving	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.60	3.72	-1.622		3.39	3.73	4.161 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Safe	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.02	3.28	-3.351	***	3.03	3.18	1.615 <sup>-</sup>	
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Stable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.48	3.59	-1.545		3.25	3.61	4.353 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Vulnerable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.96	2.79	2.232	*	3.14	2.82	3.566 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--In Crisis	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.57	2.43	1.610		3.01	2.37	6.410 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Thriving	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.53	3.49	0.535		3.09	3.64	5.731 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Safe	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.48	3.58	-1.252		3.25	3.61	3.859 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Stable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.63	3.62	0.125		3.28	3.74	5.261 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Vulnerable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.72	2.65	0.899		2.99	2.60	3.914 <sup>-</sup>	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--In Crisis	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.22	2.19	0.350		2.68	2.07	6.210 <sup>-</sup>	***

**Table C1. Survey Responses by Age and Race/Ethnicity (Continued)**

Question	Response	Age				Race/Ethnicity			
		45 or older	Under 45	t	Sig.	Minority	Non-minority	t	Sig.
Please select the bracket that best reflects your age:	% 45 or older					50.0%	62.4%	-2.824	**
Which of the following best describes your primary race?	% Minority	18.8%	27.8%	-2.824	**				
Do you own or rent your current residence?	% Renter	22.0%	41.9%	-5.670	***	46.4%	24.9%	5.223	***
What is your marital status?	% Married or partnered	55.9%	59.6%	-0.966		43.3%	61.0%	-4.080	***
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	% Bachelor's or higher	65.2%	63.1%	0.577		42.6%	70.7%	-6.780	***
What was your total household income last year from all sources in the following categories?	% \$50,000 or more	52.2%	48.5%	0.933		33.6%	55.6%	-4.780	***

\* Significant at the .05 level.

\*\* Significant at the .01 level.

\*\*\* Significant at the .001 level.

<sup>1</sup> Mean is based on values where 1=Not Connected, 2=Slightly Connected, 3=Moderately Connected, 4=Very Connected, and 5=Extremely Connected.

<sup>2</sup> Mean is based on values where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

**Table C2. Survey Responses by Home Owner and Marital Status**

Question	Response	Home owner				Marital status			
		Renter	Owner	t	Sig.	Married or partnered	Currently unmarried	t	Sig.
How many years have you lived in the Omaha area?	% 25 years or more	41.9%	56.8%	-3.551	***	53.5%	51.3%	0.570	
Are you registered to vote?	% Yes	85.3%	94.2%	-3.878	***	94.0%	86.0%	3.699	***
Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election?	% Yes	88.6%	95.3%	-3.137	**	95.3%	89.9%	2.694	**
Do you participate in your neighborhood association?	% Yes	18.8%	46.1%	-6.945	***	43.3%	29.4%	3.836	***
Do you participate in a faith-based organization?	% Yes	52.2%	64.0%	-2.905	**	63.2%	54.9%	2.270	*
Have you visited a city park in the past 12 months	% Yes	88.3%	93.1%	-2.109	*	92.5%	89.4%	1.501	
Have you visited a library in the past 12 months?	% Yes	96.6%	98.0%	-1.088		97.6%	97.8%	-0.138	
Have you visited a community/recreation center in the past 12 months?	% Yes	49.0%	59.0%	-2.421	*	59.1%	51.8%	1.982	*
Have you participated in a neighborhood event in the past 12 months?	% Yes	47.8%	64.8%	-4.204	***	63.4%	52.6%	2.924	**
Have you participated in a community event in the past 12 months?	% Yes	71.1%	81.3%	-2.979	**	83.5%	68.4%	4.864	***
Have you volunteered time to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes	50.0%	65.1%	-3.736	***	63.4%	55.3%	2.186	*
Have you contributed money to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes	50.2%	71.6%	-5.490	***	73.4%	52.2%	6.013	***
Do you currently serve as a volunteer anywhere (i.e., church, community service organization, senior citizens center, hospital, etc.)	% Yes	46.3%	70.4%	-6.134	***	65.1%	57.8%	2.001	*
Have you collaborated or partnered with someone in your community to solve a problem?	% Yes	26.6%	29.5%	-0.755		28.0%	28.7%	-0.181	
Do you spend time with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% Yes	55.9%	45.7%	2.463	*	46.3%	51.0%	-1.250	
How much time do you spend with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% at least once a week	47.3%	47.1%	0.036		47.4%	48.0%	-0.123	
Do you spend time with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% Yes	81.2%	76.7%	1.304		76.9%	79.2%	-0.736	
How much time do you spend with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% at least once a week	62.8%	59.1%	0.818		59.7%	62.5%	-0.696	

**Table C2. Survey Responses by Home Owner and Marital Status (Continued)**

Question	Response	Home owner				Marital status			
		Renter	Owner	t	Sig.	Married or partnered	Currently unmarried	t	Sig.

How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--The Omaha community in general	Mean <sup>1</sup>	3.06	3.07	-0.100		3.06	3.03	0.422	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Your neighborhood	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.78	3.13	-3.775	***	3.07	2.93	1.659	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Businesses	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.60	2.77	-1.826		2.75	2.67	0.935	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Arts community	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.62	2.69	-0.680		2.65	2.64	0.043	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Education community	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.76	2.99	-2.191	*	3.05	2.78	2.843	**
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Government	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.40	2.34	0.605		2.33	2.35	-0.204	
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Health and wellness community	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.67	2.88	-2.141	*	2.90	2.68	2.501	*
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Volunteer and charity community	Mean <sup>1</sup>	2.89	3.11	-2.131	*	3.10	2.91	2.073	*
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Thriving	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.57	3.69	-1.567		3.71	3.58	1.758	
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Safe	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.01	3.19	-2.093	*	3.20	3.05	2.033	*
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Stable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.36	3.60	-3.201	**	3.61	3.41	2.887	**
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Vulnerable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.92	2.84	1.007		2.79	3.01	-2.909	**
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--In Crisis	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.70	2.42	2.906	**	2.38	2.69	-3.542	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Thriving	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.33	3.62	-3.318	***	3.69	3.28	5.098	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Safe	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.31	3.64	-3.861	***	3.70	3.29	5.119	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Stable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	3.40	3.75	-4.282	***	3.81	3.40	5.671	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Vulnerable	Mean <sup>2</sup>	2.91	2.58	3.424	***	2.51	2.91	-4.705	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--In Crisis	Mean	2.49	2.07	4.490	***	2.01	2.46	-5.399	***

**Table C2. Survey Responses by Home Owner and Marital Status (Continued)**

Question	Response	Home owner				Marital status			
		Renter	Owner	t	Sig.	Married or partnered	Currently unmarried	t	Sig.
Please select the bracket that best reflects your age:	% 45 or older	44.3%	67.1%	-5.670	***	58.0%	61.6%	-0.966	

Which of the following best describes your primary race?	% Minority	33.8%	16.4%	5.223	***	17.0%	29.6%	-4.080	***
Do you own or rent your current residence?	% Renter					13.6%	51.9%	-11.999	***
What is your marital status?	% Married or partnered	27.5%	72.2%	-11.999	***				
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	% Bachelor's or higher	48.0%	73.8%	-6.723	***	76.4%	48.2%	8.169	***
What was your total household income last year from all sources in the following categories?	% \$50,000 or more	20.0%	66.7%	-11.818	***	75.0%	17.8%	17.609	***

\* Significant at the .05 level.

\*\* Significant at the .01 level.

\*\*\* Significant at the .001 level.

<sup>1</sup> Mean is based on values where 1=Not Connected, 2=Slightly Connected, 3=Moderately Connected, 4=Very Connected, and 5=Extremely Connected.

<sup>2</sup> Mean is based on values where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

**Table C3. Survey Responses by Education and Income**

Question	Response	Education				Income			
		Bachelor's or higher	Less than bachelor's	t	Sig.	\$50,000 or more	Less than \$50,000	t	Sig.
How many years have you lived in the Omaha area?	% 25 years or more	50.3%	57.7%	-1.879		52.8%	53.0%	-0.051	
Are you registered to vote?	% Yes	97.2%	79.4%	8.355	***	94.9%	87.4%	3.458	***
Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election?	% Yes	96.9%	84.9%	5.902	***	96.6%	89.9%	3.378	***
Do you participate in your neighborhood association?	% Yes	43.8%	26.0%	4.762	***	43.6%	31.6%	3.196	**
Do you participate in a faith-based organization?	% Yes	60.2%	59.7%	0.139		60.4%	58.5%	0.511	
Have you visited a city park in the past 12 months	% Yes	92.1%	89.4%	1.212		95.8%	87.3%	3.950	***
Have you visited a library in the past 12 months?	% Yes	98.5%	96.1%	2.042	*	97.3%	98.2%	-0.729	
Have you visited a community/recreation center in the past 12 months?	% Yes	56.2%	54.9%	0.341		58.3%	52.2%	1.572	
Have you participated in a neighborhood event in the past 12 months?	% Yes	62.7%	51.8%	2.833	**	62.3%	53.6%	2.259	*
Have you participated in a community event in the past 12 months?	% Yes	83.8%	65.7%	5.643	***	85.3%	69.4%	4.941	***
Have you volunteered time to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes	67.2%	48.8%	4.907	***	65.9%	54.2%	3.065	**
Have you contributed money to a community organization in the past 12 months?	% Yes	73.5%	49.4%	6.662	***	76.3%	52.2%	6.674	***
Do you currently serve as a volunteer anywhere (i.e., church, community service organization, senior citizens center, hospital, etc.)	% Yes	70.8%	48.6%	5.993	***	68.4%	57.2%	2.974	**
Have you collaborated or partnered with someone in your community to solve a problem?	% Yes	31.3%	23.9%	2.088	*	30.9%	28.0%	0.822	
Do you spend time with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% Yes	48.1%	49.4%	-0.343		44.0%	53.7%	-2.489	*
How much time do you spend with people who speak a different language than yourself?	% at least once a week	44.9%	52.1%	-1.363		45.4%	49.2%	-0.715	
Do you spend time with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% Yes	78.5%	77.0%	0.480		77.2%	79.1%	-0.561	
How much time do you spend with people who belong to a different ethnic group or culture than yourself?	% at least once a week	61.6%	59.5%	0.485		61.1%	60.8%	0.070	

**Table C3. Survey Responses by Education and Income (Continued)**

Question	Response	Education				Income			
		Bachelor's or higher	Less than bachelor's	t	Sig.	\$50,000 or more	Less than \$50,000	t	Sig.

How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--The Omaha community in general	Mean	3.13	2.91	2.720	**	3.14	2.96	2.196	*
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Your neighborhood	Mean	3.09	2.88	2.440	*	3.11	2.90	2.380	*
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Businesses	Mean	2.72	2.70	0.236		2.82	2.60	2.660	**
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Arts community	Mean	2.77	2.44	3.317	***	2.74	2.50	2.509	*
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Education community	Mean	3.03	2.78	2.548	*	3.20	2.70	5.071	***
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Government	Mean	2.39	2.25	1.636		2.46	2.20	2.900	**
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Health and wellness community	Mean	2.86	2.73	1.308		2.92	2.69	2.438	*
How connected you feel to these community organizations in Omaha--Volunteer and charity community	Mean	3.15	2.84	3.204	**	3.14	2.91	2.434	*
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Thriving	Mean	3.73	3.52	2.915	**	3.81	3.50	4.344	***
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Safe	Mean	3.25	2.93	4.107	***	3.28	2.97	4.021	***
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Stable	Mean	3.66	3.29	5.166	***	3.75	3.30	6.243	***
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--Vulnerable	Mean	2.78	3.07	-3.804	***	2.75	3.03	-3.538	***
Following are some descriptions of the Omaha area--In Crisis	Mean	2.33	2.83	-5.724	***	2.34	2.69	-3.932	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Thriving	Mean	3.68	3.24	5.189	***	3.77	3.25	6.270	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Safe	Mean	3.70	3.23	5.743	***	3.75	3.29	5.651	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Stable	Mean	3.82	3.31	6.668	***	3.87	3.38	6.551	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--Vulnerable	Mean	2.51	2.99	-5.526	***	2.46	2.89	-4.970	***
Following are some descriptions of the neighborhood or area of Omaha in which you live--In Crisis	Mean	1.97	2.60	-7.526	***	1.96	2.43	-5.466	***

**Table C3. Survey Responses by Education and Income (Continued)**

Question	Response	Education				Income			
		Bachelor's or higher	Less than bachelor's	t	Sig.	\$50,000 or more	Less than \$50,000	t	Sig.
Please select the bracket that best reflects your age:	% 45 or older	60.8%	58.6%	0.577		61.5%	57.9%	0.933	
Which of the following best describes your primary race?	% Minority	14.8%	36.0%	-6.780	***	14.6%	29.8%	-4.780	***



Do you own or rent your current residence?	% Renter	20.9%	44.6%	-6.723	***	11.1%	50.0%	11.818	***
What is your marital status?	% Married or partnered	68.0%	38.0%	8.169	***	85.1%	29.1%	17.609	***
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	% Bachelor's or higher					83.9%	44.6%	11.576	***
What was your total household income last year from all sources in the following categories?	% \$50,000 or more	65.9%	23.0%	11.576	***				

\* Significant at the .05 level.

\*\* Significant at the .01 level.

\*\*\* Significant at the .001 level.

<sup>1</sup> Mean is based on values where 1=Not Connected, 2=Slightly Connected, 3=Moderately Connected, 4=Very Connected, and 5=Extremely Connected.

<sup>2</sup> Mean is based on values where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

## Appendix D: Community-Culture and Context Sources

### EXAMINING COMMUNITY-CULTURE AND LOCAL NARRATIVE TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS POVERTY & RELATED SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA

By:  
R.K. Piper  
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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this the 50<sup>th</sup> year since President Lyndon Johnson and the U.S. Congress declared a national domestic war to address the massive crisis of poverty in the United States, it seems a fitting time to take a “completely fresh look” at the multiplicity of factors underlying this devastating and extremely-complex problem. Based on a combination of unique historical and community-cultural characteristics and the very poor poverty-related outcomes described in this paper, the City of Omaha [Nebraska] provides a case study to better understand the roots and nature of poverty.

Based largely on Patrick McNamara’s invaluable, but since neglected, 2007 comparative case study of Omaha’s community culture,<sup>12</sup> this paper shows that certain components of and patterns within it, have been identified that are clearly tied to some of the worst urban-minority poverty and related socio-economic problems in the United States. These preliminary findings are especially ironic, as Omaha as an entity and a great many of its citizens, see and tout themselves and their home-place as a virtually-utopian representation of “the good life” and among the absolutely best places to live, raise families and conduct business anywhere in the country and the entire world.

Our examination and analyses of McNamara’s primarily qualitative, theory-building study, along with additional research findings, form the foundation for this paper, which we hope will be a “bridge” to the future development of a more-quantitative, applied research and poverty-policy development agenda. By focusing on the identified components of Omaha’s community culture which are linked to poverty and other local problems, this new information should be of enormous benefit to individuals and institutions that are addressing the many concrete issues and ongoing, poverty-related crises in Omaha and Nebraska.

#### I. COMMUNITY CULTURE AND CULTURAL NARRATIVES

“Community culture” is generally defined as the concepts, memes, beliefs, values, customs, practices, language, behaviors and institutions that help define a particular population. To summarize and comprehend this defining information, certain stories are created that come to represent a group or population’s self- and shared identities and values. These tales are commonly referred to as “community-culture” narratives within academic disciplines such as sociology, cultural anthropology, social-psychology, history, political-economics, etc.

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<sup>12</sup>See “Collaborative Success and Community Culture: Cross-Sectoral Partnerships Addressing Homelessness in Omaha and Portland (McNamara, 2007).”

A more-specific and academic definition of “community-culture” (and the corresponding cultural narrative) employed in this paper, is the one used by McNamara, which includes three major definitional factors: 1) **community power**, 2) **social capital** and 3) **political history**. Taken together, these factors are used to create various typologies or archetypes that are found in different cities and locations, which may then be used to more-accurately and meaningfully **understand and evaluate local community cultures, narratives and their impacts**.

## A. COMMUNITY POWER IN OMAHA

*Community Power* has generally been defined as the intentional use of various resources to exert a group’s collective will over others (Wrong, 1995; Domhoff, 2002). McNamara modifies this definition somewhat in his work, in emphasizing that power is also, “...a group’s *ability to use resources to achieve desired ends*.” The following factors are of primary importance in **classifying Omaha as a “private-sector” community culture** (McNamara, 2007).

### 1. Elite/Private-Sector Leadership and Centrally-Controlled Decision-Making

Since the city’s inception in 1854, a clear **pattern of highly-centralized and concentrated control and decision-making**, wielded by a **relatively-small group of elite and powerful leaders** (usually private-sector businessmen), has existed and persisted. In three major eras,<sup>13</sup> under widely-different economic and social conditions, this defining factor of **strong top-down, almost exclusively private-sector leadership**, has been shown to be the driving and controlling force in Omaha’s development and performance.

### 2. Overriding Values of Economic Reductionism and Profit-Motives in Omaha Culture

While it might not be surprising that **economic and financial gain** are the **dominant values** in a private-sector community culture (McNamara, 2007), **the extent** to which they **override and undermine efforts to address serious social problems like poverty** in Omaha, is not widely recognized or understood. These findings are consistent with elite control and economic **“growth machine” theories** (Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch, 1987), which reveal that economic self-interest and maximization of financial gain for the elite, is the **primary motivation** behind private sector, government and non-profit **collaborations** to develop land and construct buildings and infrastructure.<sup>14</sup>

While some argue this development benefits the entire community by creating employment (Peterson, 1981), critics point out that such a **single-minded focus** on the generation of **enormous profits** for the economic elite and other beneficiaries, **comes at the expense of the**

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<sup>13</sup> The three (3) eras of elite, private-sector control in Omaha are: 1) Initial Omaha “Boosterism,” rampant elite land-use speculation and development, Trans-Continental Railroad/Union Pacific Outside-Investor Control (1854-1897), 2) Political-Boss Tom Dennison’s Elite Power and Control for the Private Sector (1898-1931) and 3) Elite Private-Sector and Corporate Control from Ak-Sar-Ben to Heritage Services (1932-Present). See (Larsen and Cotrell, 1982, 1997; McNamara, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> An extremely-long list of such “growth-machine” projects in Omaha over the decades, includes the three most recent ones: 1) the \$291 million CenturyLink/Qwest Convention Center (2003), 2) the \$92 million Holland Center for the Performing Arts (2009) and 3) the \$132 million TD Ameritrade Baseball Park (built to retain the NCAA College World Series in Omaha until at least 2035 if constructed).

working poor, racial and ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups (Waste, 1993; Box, 1998) and results in weaker growing income and wealth inequality within a community (Krugman, 2014).

### 3. Omaha's and Nebraska's Comparatively Weak and Ineffective Governments

Other effects of long-term, over-reliance on a small group of private-sector leaders for all important community decision-making, control of social-power networks and the distribution of jobs, incomes and other economic benefits, is that local and state governments and nonprofit organizations will likely be relatively weak and ineffective in addressing social problems and other matters (Lynd & Lynd, 1927; Hunter, 1953; Stone, 2005).

### 4. The Role of the "Free" Press in Public Policy and Social Control

A final factor of community power noted in this paper (and examined in more detail by McNamara), is the role of the local press serving as a tool of the elite to maintain power and control in Omaha. Even prior to the City's founding in 1854, the business elite have continuously used the local newspapers<sup>15</sup> in a "booster" capacity to advertise and promote Omaha as an "ideal garden" for investment and opportunity (Larsen & Cotrell, 1997). Since its inception in 1889,<sup>16</sup> the *Omaha World-Herald* (the city's only paper since 1937) has vigorously and continuously pushed the views of the controlling business leaders and their agenda, virtually becoming the embodiment of the Omaha elite and their values system (Darlstrom, 1988).

## B. SOCIAL CAPITAL IN OMAHA

*Social capital* was first popularly defined and expanded upon by Robert Putnam in his works investigating the nature and status of civic engagement (1993, 1995 and 2000). Other social scientists also contributed to and expanded the modern concept, noting that the function of social capital (like that of physical infrastructure/factories and financial and human capital in the production of goods and services) is to facilitate the productive achievement of particular societal goals, outcomes and ends (Coleman, 1990; Edwards and Foley, 1999).

A similar working definition used by McNamara in his study is that, "*Social capital consists of networks of trust and the norms that exist in a community to be productively used by individuals and organizations [...to get things done that cannot otherwise be done].*"

### 1. High Levels of Social Bonding and Low Levels of Social Bridging Capital

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<sup>15</sup> These early Omaha papers are The Arrow (June, 1854), the Nebraskian (1856), the Nebraskian and Times (1859), the Nebraska Republican (1863), the Omaha Herald (1865), the Omaha Bee (1872), the Evening World (1885).

<sup>16</sup> The paper was founded in its present form through the merger of the Omaha Herald (1865) and the Omaha World (1885).

The **networks of trust or connectedness** that exist within some groups, such as those of **community leadership** for example, exhibit **extremely high levels of “social bonding”** capital (Putnam & Feldstein, 2003) and trust between the individuals that have been **admitted and accepted** into the group. If a person or organization has **these types of personal “connections,”** access to sufficient resources and opportunities [in Omaha] will very likely be made available by those in power (Banfield & Wilson, 1963).

The equally or perhaps even **more-negative downside** of these very high-bonding networks of trust, is that **those not within or connected** to certain groups, feel the **extremely low levels of “social bridging”** social capital (Putnam & Feldstein, 2003). The resulting **inability** of many or most individuals and organizations to have **meaningful connections** with “more-elite” individuals and groups, creates the **very-real and oppressive** sense and atmosphere, that Omaha is highly “fractional” and “fragmented” (McNamara 2003).

## **2. Social Norms and Unspoken Rules in Omaha**

The **“norms” and “unspoken rules”** in Omaha manifest as **“conservative” pressures** to live **traditional lifestyles** that include long-term hetero-sexual marriage, child-rearing, church attendance, community volunteerism and/or donating to charities and causes, along with the display of other **expected values, attitudes, behaviors, duties and obligations**. The over-riding theme is that **to rise** to a level of affluence and influence in Omaha, persons need to **conform to, live within and abide by** these **normative systems and constraints** (McNamara, 2007).

## **3. Philanthropy and Social Networks as Mechanisms of Elite Control**

Through the decades, private-sector leaders and their followers, employees and collaborating individuals and institutions have employed a **variety of mechanisms** to gain and maintain **power and control of others** in Omaha (Larsen & Cotrell, 1997). Eikenberry (2007) notes that **even philanthropy, through control of its boards and social networks**, the determination of the **type and nature of funded projects**, the **levels of funding** and in other ways, can be a **mechanism of elite community power and social control**.

## **4. Structural Racism, Sexism and Other Forms of Exclusion in Omaha**

Other forms of social control by the elite are related to the **access** that is allowed or not allowed to people of color, women, nonprofit and social service leaders, government officials and other **“outsiders”** (McNamara, 2007). While some in Omaha insist that these forms of discrimination and exclusion do not even exist anymore in this city, the data collected from key informants provides **strong evidence** that this is certainly **not the case**.

## **C. POLITICAL HISTORY IN OMAHA**

*Political history* is the third aspect of community culture to be considered, which McNamara further refines among three sub-indicators: 1) **citizen participation**, 2) control of

public process and policy<sup>17</sup> and 3) leadership. He also notes that understanding the political history of a locale is especially important in accurately classifying the type of community-culture under study.

## 1. Citizen Participation

McNamara (2007) notes that high levels of citizen participation and meaningful first-hand involvement in the democratic decision-making process, as occurs in Portland [Oregon], is a defining characteristic of public-sector community cultures, as opposed to private-sector cultures where major decisions are controlled and made by a small, elite as in Omaha.

For citizens to acquire greater and more-significant democratic participation, many factors such as: 1) politicians and public administrators creating more avenues for real involvement, 2) higher expectations by citizens that participation is a fundamental right and 3) holding both public and private-sector leaders of the local power-structure accountable for bad decisions and poor social and economic outcomes are necessary.

## 2. Private-Sector Control of Public Process and Policy in Omaha

Growth machine theory holds that elite groups control local government decisions to maximize economic benefits to themselves, their members and/or employees and followers (Molotch, 1976; Logan & Molotch, 1987). Political decisions, for example those related to proposed public/private construction projects, endorsed by the elite/corporate leaders who stand to gain the most monetarily from them, are regularly supported and approved by politicians (whose political campaigns have been supported by the private developers) and are then implemented by public administrators.

Although the local booster-narrative is that this is a good model of public-private-nonprofit inter-sectoral partnership and collaboration, this largely-concealed process often ends up being little more than, "...an insulated, elitist activity in which residents, neighborhood groups, grass-roots community organizations and individual citizens are not viewed as essential or explicit to these initiatives" (Turner, 2002).

## 3. Political Leadership

The elite leadership of Omaha has primarily been private-sector "heavy weights," who have obtained and retained tight control for all but of few of the sixteen (16) decades the city has existed (McNamara, 2007). One of McNamara's important conclusions, is that a challenge in improving community cultures and collaborations, is the false notion that one sector can completely dominate all others. To have a healthy, prosperous, fully-functioning and well-integrated community "...one sector alone cannot sustain a community."

## II. OMAHA'S COMMUNITY-CULTURE NARRATIVE VS. OMAHA'S REALITY

This chapter presents a further examination of Omaha's community-culture and narrative, presenting additional more-quantitative (objective) data as it relates to both. As shown in the

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<sup>17</sup>McNamara specifically cites land-use planning, development and valuation decisions, as examples of how control of these by the private-sector elites, defines and impacts public/private "collaborations" in Omaha.

preceding chapter, Omaha's community-culture narrative, historically paints a **portrait of Omaha** as unquestionably among the **best places** in the U.S. and world, to live, raise families and conduct business.

## A. THE "VIRTUALLY-UTOPIAN" NARRATIVE OF OMAHA

Omaha is home to five Fortune 500 companies: Berkshire Hathaway, ConAgra Foods, Union Pacific, Peter Kiewit Sons' and Mutual of Omaha. As noted in the Omaha World Herald:

*"Using the federal government's broadest definition of what constitutes a metropolitan area, a World Herald analysis shows that Omaha is home to more Fortune 500 companies per capita than any major metro area in the nation."* (Cordes, February 3, 2013).

Similarly, Omaha's Chamber of Commerce and the Omaha World Herald consistently present Omaha's other positive, **high national rankings** on a variety of community factors, which tend to support the utopian claims of the city's incomparable virtues. Some of these **"best"** national rankings are presented in the left-hand column of Table 1 below.

To provide a **more-balanced and accurate view** of other wide-ranging, actual conditions in Omaha, however, the right-hand column presents a **side-by-side comparison** of some of Omaha's **"worst"** national conditions' rankings. This pertinent and often dismissed information demonstrates why large segments of the population refer to the city as **"The Two Omaha's."**

**Table 1**  
**Best and Worst Conditions Rankings and Indicators for Greater Omaha [Nebraska]**

<b>OMAHA'S BEST CONDITIONS RANKINGS &amp; INDICATORS (Source)</b>	<b>OMAHA'S WORST CONDITIONS RANKINGS &amp; INDICATORS (Source)</b>
#3 Best Cities to Start a Business  (Nerdwallet.com)	#3 Highest U.S. Black Poverty Rate (100 Largest U.S. Metropolitan Areas)  (U.S. Census Bureau)
#1 New and Expanding Facilities (MSA's 200,000 – 1 Million)  (Site Selection Magazine)	#1 Highest U.S. Black-Children Poverty Rate (100 Largest U.S. Metropolitan Areas)  (U.S. Census Bureau)
#1 Top 10 Best Cities to Raise a Family  (Movoto Blog)	#2 Highest U.S. Rate of Placing Children in Foster Care <sup>18</sup>  (U.S. Department Health and Human Services)
#3 Number of Economic Development Projects (MSA's 200,000 – 1 Million)  (Site Selection Magazine)	#1 Highest U.S. Black Homicide Victimization Rate  (Violence Prevention Center)

<sup>18</sup> This ranking is for the state of Nebraska with the vast majority of placements occurring in families in Omaha.



#2 America's 10 Best Cities for Professional Women (Motovo Blog)	#2 Highest Percentage of Hourly Workers Earning at or Below Minimum Wage <sup>19</sup> (U.S. Department of Labor)
#4 Top 50 Military-Friendly Cities (G.I. Jobs)	#2 Lowest U.S. Eligibility Level for Childcare Assistance for Low-Income Working Families <sup>20</sup> (Nebraska Appleseed Center)
#1 Least Financial Stress on Households (Credibility.org)	#2 Widest U.S. Economic Disparity Between Black and White Residents (Omaha World-Herald)
#1 Best City for Cheapskates (Kiplinger, 2013)	#1 Highest U.S. Black Arrest Rates for Marijuana Possession (American Civil Liberties Union, 2013)

## B. THE REALITY OF OMAHA'S EXCLUDED AND DAMAGED COMMUNITIES

With all the massive resources available in Omaha, among many highly-vested philanthropic foundations, a high proportion of wealthy professionals and businessmen and an elite private-sector leadership that never fails at any initiative or project they undertake (McNamara, 2007), policy-makers must ask, “Why then, does Omaha continue to produce and struggle with such extreme poverty after 50 years of “effort?” And perhaps more importantly, if the private-sector leadership takes credit for all the positive economic outcomes that have been produced, must they not also have to take responsibility for all the extremely-poor social outcomes that Omaha has also produced?

Why do Omaha and Nebraska have minority-child poverty rates at 18% (the highest in the entire U.S.) and 34% of single-parent families with related children that are below poverty at a rate; 16,597 adults and children receiving welfare (TANF); 82,000 children receiving food stamps and 223,269 children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP (Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, 2014)? Unfortunately, these data highlight the great and growing economic disparity between the worlds of Omaha's Fortune 500 companies, passive investors, related businesses and industries, their employees and beneficiaries and that of the working-poor, minority and disadvantaged citizens and their families in Omaha and Nebraska, living near or suffering in poverty every day.

### 1. The History and Current Context of Anti-Poverty Measures in the U.S. and Omaha

While such simplistic beliefs and myths that the poor and minorities lack motivation, adequate morals and/or are in poverty solely due to their own poor choices and behaviors, have been debunked by the social sciences and human-service professionals, the objective realities of

<sup>19</sup> The ranking is within the mid-western geographic region.

<sup>20</sup> Based on the percentage of the official U.S. Poverty Level set by the state of Nebraska (and translated into dollars).



poverty here are that: 1) nearly one in five or 20% of Omaha's children live in poverty for at least part of each year, 2) 30,000 Nebraskans are at risk of homelessness and 3) that at one local Omaha elementary school, 80% of the students live at or below the poverty line. Families in poverty have doubled since 2000 in this area.

In Nebraska, Republican Governor Dave Heineman has denied federally-funded Medicaid expansion three times, which was made available to the states at no initial cost, as a result of the congressionally-approved Affordable Care Act.; denied access to critically-necessary driver licenses for authorized young people under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA); was even against taxpayer-funded pre-natal care for undocumented immigrants and is also against granting in-state tuition to children of undocumented immigrants.

To further explore community-cultural and narrative themes, the following section of this summary provides additional information on some of the recently adopted policies and implementations of poverty-related remediation measures and actions, in Omaha and Nebraska, which have been anything but helpful or remedial.

## **2. Catastrophic State Government Failures Responsible for Worsening Poverty**

Many catastrophic failures by Nebraska's state government have received considerable national attention in the New York Times and other media since 2008. This was the year that NE Legislative Bill 157 (which was originally intended for infants, but the law did not specify the age of youths), allowed parents/guardians to drop off any children they could not adequately care for at hospitals and other public facilities, which children would then become legal wards of the state and therefore eligible for previously-denied assistance, with no questions asked.

What nationally came to be known as Nebraska's "Safe-Haven Crisis," was the first major indicator and widely-visible sign, of the extent to which public mental-health, human social, correctional and other critical services for the working poor and their children in the state, were often non-existent or completely inaccessible to those who need them most. In 2008, 6,600 children were in the custody of the State of Nebraska, making it the second highest ratio of children in state care in the U.S.<sup>21</sup>

To reduce the number of state wards, the Governor and NHHS "muscle-through" and implemented (over the vociferous but unsuccessful objections of service providers and child advocates), an inadequately-researched and poorly understood program of "privatization" of the child welfare system. This action practically and essentially shifted the burden and responsibility of caring and providing critically needed services for children, from the state to five private contractors in 2009, without budgeting adequate transitional, oversight or compensatory resources.

While the wildly-optimistic and naïve goals of the Governor and the state were to enhance efficiency and accountability while controlling the costs of the failing system, this effort was another spectacular failure to address poverty and related problems.<sup>22</sup> A partial list of some of

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<sup>21</sup> Also at that time, there were only six practicing child psychiatrists in the entire state, and the mental and behavioral health services for children and adolescents were scarce, unaffordable, and difficult to access, according to reports prepared by Voices for Children, Nebraska Appleseed and (later) the Nebraska Legislature.

<sup>22</sup> As reported by the Omaha World-Herald, information gathered in the investigations above, into the disastrous, privatization initiative driven by the Republican administration, revealed that privatization has resulted in an additional \$75 million in direct expenditures for the state, not a cost savings as promised. The studies also found that another \$75 million or more in other indirect costs, due to the loss of valued and experienced state staff, other

the worst failures and performance by Nebraska's state government in addressing poverty-related problems includes:

- Nebraska's "Safe Haven" Crisis
- "Privatization" of Health and Human Services/Child Welfare Programs
- Federal Non-Compliance and Closing of the Beatrice, Nebraska State Developmental Center (Mental Disability and Health Facility)<sup>23</sup>
- "Access Nebraska" (Mandatory Online System to Access SNAP/Other Benefits)<sup>24</sup>
- Nebraska Department of Corrections (Early Release of Nikko Jenkins and Other Serious and Violent Prisoners)<sup>25</sup>

But just as the stark incompetency and weakness of the public sector has dramatically emerged, a recent "cross-sectoral" program failure to close Omaha's long-standing educational gaps (Building Bright Futures),<sup>26</sup> may be the first crack in the "myth of invincibility" of the wealthy-elite domination and control of the social, economic and political culture of Omaha.

In his interviews with key community informants knowledgeable of its history and inner-workings, there was consistent agreement that if any local project or initiative was to be successful, all that was needed was the participation and support of members of this elite group. If these business leaders were behind a proposal, history had shown it would unquestionably be "successful," if they were not, it would "fail."

While the overall analysis of public-policy was correct (that poor educational performance and poverty are strongly linked) and the right approach, both the implementation efforts and the amount of resources necessary to reduce or end poverty were completely

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system-wide impacts and needed remediation efforts for affected families, will be forthcoming in the next several years. Today, only one of the original five service providers is still in business in/with Nebraska.

<sup>23</sup> This facility had a decades-long history of problems and was found out of compliance by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (see "An Indictment of Indifference," The Center for Disability Rights, Law and Advocacy, 2007) costing the state approximately \$30 million dollars in lost Federal revenue and fines.

<sup>24</sup> This mandatory online system to receive welfare benefits implemented in 2011, has received constant and severe criticism since its implementation. It is now the subject of a law suit filed by advocates for persons seeking SNAP benefits due to unlawful extensive processing delays for the Federal Food-Stamp Benefit.

<sup>25</sup> In June 2014, an Omaha World-Herald investigation showed that the Nebraska Department of Corrections had improperly calculated the sentences of and/or mistakenly released approximately 873 serious and violent offenders early, sometimes by as much as 35 years. One case is especially significant involving a now-convicted murderer named Nikko Jenkins. Jenkins was incarcerated as a youth and had a long history of serious mental-health problems as a juvenile prior to his conviction. Despite this fact he was subjected to long periods of solitary confinement and his pleas for treatment were ignored by Corrections, who believed he was "faking" them. Prior to his release Jenkins begged for treatment and not to be released, warning officials that he was hearing voices and that he would kill people if he was let out. Again his pleas were ignored and he killed four persons within weeks of his being freed from custody.

<sup>26</sup> Building Bright Futures (BBF) was organized in 2006 by Omaha leaders and philanthropists to address education gaps and issues impacting poor children and their families. The goals included that within five years, every poor child in Douglas and Sarpy County would have health care, tutors and mentors, and the opportunity to go to college. The organization spent about \$7 million dollars a year donated by Omaha philanthropists. One of the most intriguing goals of BBF was that public policy regarding poverty would be highlighted and the initiative would insure that every poor child was as well-equipped as possible to face the challenges pursuing their education despite being poor.

insufficient and must be dramatically larger in size and scope. Some very basic ameliorations must include more-comparable wages and incomes throughout the city (Nebraska's minimum wage, received by a majority of Omaha's working poor families, is a paltry \$7.25 per hour); universal healthcare, affordable and available transportation and housing, and an educational system with highly-skilled and culturally-competent personnel who are trained to work with families who are experiencing inter-generational poverty.

### III. STUDY FINDINGS AND ANALYSES, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The long-standing control of Omaha's economic, social and political spheres by generations of small, powerful, elite-circles of wealthy businessmen has produced great economic benefits for the city, sometimes astounding personal wealth for themselves and for many of their employees and others having connections to them (McNamara, 2007).

However, the complete domination of Omaha by a private-sector community culture and narrative, has according to "growth theory" (Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch 1987) and the data compiled for this paper, likewise helped create and extend extreme conditions of poverty and other social problems for many other of its citizens, particularly those who have no access to the exclusive social and economic networks that enforce and perpetuate this culture.<sup>27</sup>

#### A. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE, MODERNIZATION & IMPROVEMENT

The ultimate intent of this paper is not merely to criticize, but to present findings and information about the culture and conditions of Omaha, to see if we can discern or point out facts, patterns, perceptions, clues or new understandings, that might be useful in bringing needed change, modernization or improvements, for the betterment of all people in Omaha, or in any other locales where they are needed.

The following sub-sections contain what we believe are the most-important findings gleaned through our efforts, including recommendations on how they might best be applied by interested parties, to achieve the aforementioned goals.

##### 1. Communities, Cultures and Narratives Are Not Static

Despite the fact that Omaha's community culture has maintained its primary private-sector classification and other characteristics, almost continuously for 160 years since it was founded, recent research suggests that no communities or their cultures are static or unchanging (Sinclair, 2002). Anthony Giddens (1984) points out just the opposite in fact, arguing that

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<sup>27</sup> Historians Larsen and Cotrell and others describe the destruction of the black middle-class as primarily accruing to four (4) economic and social policies pursued by Omaha's leadership in the early and middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: 1) the closure and re-organization of the meat-packing and railroad industries in Omaha that had a devastating impact on black and minority employment, 2) comprehensive racial discrimination against blacks which did not allow them to live or obtain housing outside a small area (ghetto) in north Omaha (where a majority of black citizens still reside), 3) discrimination in hiring blacks to work on the construction of the Interstate Highway System and other construction projects in the 1950's and later and 4) the successful efforts of Omaha's leaders to largely exclude the federal government and its anti-poverty programs from having a strong leadership presence in Omaha (to ensure the elite's continuing complete dominance in policy and power) during the early 1960s and 1970s, that provided a wide array of services and benefits (including the development of a professional class) to blacks in cities across the U.S.

communities are continually changing, transitioning and restructuring, even if this process is not immediately apparent.

## 2. The Role of Youth and Generational Change in Social, Political and Economic Progress

McNamara's (2007) interviews with key informants in Omaha, demonstrate a clear pattern of concern among various segments of the population, about what the next generation of leaders will "bring to the table" as the previous generation retires. Some felt that the training of replacements in the elite, private sector leadership has been well underway for years, to insure a seamless transition with little change. Others felt quite differently and expressed hope, that the more-evolved value-systems and extensive knowledge of successful strategies to address social problems, could be the keys to "finally tearing down the Berlin Wall" of the imposing and harmful, cultural resistance to needed change.

Both Omaha and Nebraska have decades-old, serious problems of massive numbers of highly-educated and motivated youths migrating to other states (commonly referred to as the "brain drain").<sup>28</sup> These figures alone should give the private-sector and elite leadership sufficient evidence to investigate, that perhaps some improvements and upgrades in Omaha's community-culture and a more-realistic narrative might be in order, to help stem the continuing flows of talented citizens to destinations with alternative cultures.

Our new era of rapidly-evolving capacities for interactions, social organizing and communication through social media and other forms, should enliven the imaginations of the designers of and participants in, the next versions of social structures, processes and practices in all disciplines, that are have already been here in other cities/states for a decade or more and are rapidly approaching in the "laggers" throughout the U.S.

## 3. A Call for a More "Public Regarding" Community Culture

Dye and Zeigler (1993) are cited by McNamara in his study of Omaha's community culture, as calling for the private-sector elite to become more "public regarding." This notion may become more acceptable to the elites for a variety of reasons in the near future, perhaps partially-based on their recent experiences of failure, in attempting to address some of Omaha's most-egregious social problems. This means a much greater sharing of power and decision-making with all citizens and public and nonprofit-sector institutions.

On some levels, there must be a realization among the leadership that higher levels of publicly-controlled revenue are absolutely necessary, to improve state and local government functioning and to effectively address our growing lists of worsening social and environmental crises. There must also be a growing realization among the elite leaders, that the wildly-growing levels of wealth and income-inequality we have seen in society for over 30 years, are simply not sustainable and could jeopardize the entire economic system upon which the lives of everyone (including their own) are based.

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<sup>28</sup> According to just-released U.S. Census Bureau data, Nebraska posted huge net losses of college graduates in the past two years. In 2011 and 2012 alone, an astounding 3,680 and 4,117 more college graduates left the state than entered it.

#### 4. Strengthening Governmental & Nonprofit Sectors and Increasing Citizen Participation

In public-sector community cultures such as Portland, a stronger, more-effective and productive government sector exists, which plays key roles in addressing social problems like poverty, in ways that are not possible for private-sector entities (McNamara, 2007). Local and state governments are especially well-positioned and have legally-authorized powers in creating avenues and venues for meaningful citizen participation in the democratic decision-making process.

Perhaps most important of all, governments and public administrators could be the key and legitimate actors, to initiate improved collaborative cross-sectoral projects. Such more-inclusive collaborations have proven to be the most-effective organizational structures to address social ills like poverty, in all arenas of personal, familial and community betterment.

#### 5. Community Culture, Poverty/Social Problems Research and Policy Development

Finally, our greatest hope and highest recommendation is that the information and findings in this report (and any subsequent research it may help generate) be reviewed, discussed and employed by wide-ranging and inclusive individuals, groups and institutions in Omaha, Nebraska and interested communities anywhere. More specifically, it should be used to make needed improvements in cultural performance, poverty abatement and related-social problem outcomes. As we have stressed throughout, this paper should be only viewed and employed as a starting point for additional investigation and research, better policy development and more-forceful and effective community organization and action.

Progress in these areas will require that those involved in these efforts, transcend and help transform those aspects of the local community culture and narrative that are actually creating poverty and other social dysfunctions, or at best, are providing unnecessary resistance to what clearly and finally needs to be done, to diminish the expanding poverty in Omaha and throughout the U.S.

## APPENDIX D. REFERENCES

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